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ST. PETERSBURG:

ITS PEOPLE;

Their Character and Institutions.

BY

EDWARD JERRMANN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN,

BY

FREDERICK HARDMAN.

NEW YORK:
A. S. BARNES & CO., 51 AND 53 JOHN-STREET
CINCINNATI:—H. W. DERBY.
1855.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN sending to press this English version of a very entertaining German volume, the translator does not feel called upon to prefix other introduction than the expression of his belief in the book's accuracy and impartiality. Mr. Jerrmann's preface explains the principles to which he has striven to adhere, whilst writing of a country of which he has evidently brought away a more favourable impression than it has left upon the majority of its recent literary visitors. From his fifteenth chapter we learn what he himself by profession is,—namely, a stage-player, who passed three years in St. Petersburg as manager of a German company. The patronage he there met with was hardly calculated to cast a rose-coloured reflection on his reminiscences of the Russian capital; otherwise we might perhaps be justified in suspecting that the actor's gratitude had swayed the author's pen to undue laudation of the Emperor Nicholas, of whom he is manifestly a warm admirer.

In the original German, the word "unpolitical" is prefixed to the title of this book, whose contents hardly justify its use. The political bias, if bias there be, is in a contrary direction to that traceable in most English, French, and German works published of late years, and relating to Russia. Upon the whole, Mr. Jerrmann rather approves than blames the present order of things in

that country, which he considers to be in a transition state of steady but slow improvement—the more satisfactory because slow. He does not, however, dogmatically contend for the soundness of his opinions, but will apparently be well content if his readers credit the facts with which he furnishes them, thereupon to form their own judgment. Thus much can hardly be refused to a writer, who, although hitherto unknown in England, is evidently shrewd and intelligent, whose veracity we have no grounds to call in question, and to whom we are certainly indebted for a highly interesting book.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE friendly reception which several of the following sketches from St. Petersburg have already found in various journals, encourages me, in compliance with the gratifying invitation of my publishers, to place them before the public in a collective form, and with considerable augmentations. I do not deceive myself as to the difficulties of my undertaking; I know how much more is justly required from a book than from fugitive newspaper sketches; and on that account I have arranged the present volume in the unassuming form of detached pictures. I do not pretend to pass judgment; I confine myself to depicting that which I have partly seen with my own eyes, and partly derived from trustworthy sources.

The present tone of public opinion in no way discourages me. In a far more agitated time, upon my return from France, I wrote my book on Paris; and although, in many respects, it was directly opposed to the prevailing opinion of the political and social condition of France, it nevertheless met, at the hands of both readers and critics, the indulgent consideration which those may fairly claim who honestly strive after a knowledge of the truth. Now, as then, I address myself to my task in a cheerful and impartial spirit.

Observant by education, by calling, and by inclination, and weaned, by travel and experience, from many prevalent prejudices, I noted, with careful eye, during three years' sojourn in the Russian capital, all that my social relations allowed me opportunity of investigating; and I here add to my observations such remarks only as are their natural and inevitable results. I put myself forward neither as moralist nor as politician. My aim is to display the customs and manners of a foreign land, with that candour and freedom of speech whose consequences certainly darkened some of the best years of my life, but of which I have never been able to divest my-

self. I must either speak the naked truth or be silent. In speaking of the men and things of Russia, I have exhibited them as I beheld and appreciated them. If I took a false view, it was the fault of my powers of perception, not of my will. I can see only with *my own* eyes; but the consciousness that I have in no way misrepresented what I have seen, gives me courage to present my observations to the world, at risk of running counter to the prevailing opinion of many, and of opening to prejudice a wide field of criticism. I say PREJUDICE, and I repeat the word, for on no subject have I, in enlightened Germany, heard such prejudiced opinions expressed as on the subject of Russia and its Ruler. We are more intimately acquainted with the state of China than with that of a country which commences at our frontier. To the many erroneous views with respect to Russia which have obtained wide currency amongst us, the various books published concerning that country have not a little contributed. For, independently of wilful misrepresentations, French and German writers have contemplated the social and political circumstances of Russia with the eyes of their own nationality. This is wrong and unjust, for every country and every nation has a right to demand that it should be examined and judged from the point of view of its own peculiar idiocrasy. He who refuses to take his observations from that point of view, may achieve sparkling comparisons, witty reasoning, jest and satire, but will never attain to a natural and lifelike representation of the people he professes to describe.

It is with heartfelt conviction that I praise in Russia much which in Germany I should bitterly blame. Persons who have blamed those things in Russia have had before their eyes, when forming their judgment, not *Russia*, but *their own* country, *their* nationality, *themselves* in short. I have done my utmost to avoid this subjective manner of viewing things, and have endeavoured, when investigating whatever struck me as strange, to make due allowance for differences of climate and civilisation, and in the temperament and character of the people. As for the rest, I stand upon *facts*, partly historical, partly still existing, and therefore incontrovertible. My views may possibly be refuted, but the facts upon which they are based defy refutation.

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PICTURES FROM ST. PETERSBURG.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

ST. PETERSBURG, the capital of an empire which borders on Germany; St. Petersburg, which reckons amongst its inhabitants upwards of forty thousand Germans, of whom a large proportion correspond with friends and relations in their own country; St. Petersburg, which annually receives several hundred German guests, is nevertheless as imperfectly known to us as if it lay beyond the Mountains of the Moon; and the accounts we get of it are so fabulously strange, that when we come to visit it we scarcely dare to trust the evidence of our own eyes. Even according to the sketches given by Messrs. Kohl and Pelz (Treumund Welp), who nevertheless abode there long enough to know better, one trembles lest one should encounter a bear on the Newsky Perspective, or receive in one's peaceable dwelling the visit of a famished wolf. His mind full of such erroneous anticipations, the traveller fancies himself a stage or two beyond Christendom, expects to make acquaintance with a semi-barbarous land, and approaches the City of the Czars with trepidation and anxiety. How startling and agreeable is the contrast, to these gloomy forebodings, of the reality that presents itself on entering the Russian capital, especially if the approach be made from the side of the sea. The beauty of the entrance into St. Petersburg cannot easily be paralleled. First, magnificent Cronstadt, with its harbour full of countless ships, its docks without end, its remarkable towers and works, rising in wonderful strength and beauty out of the depths of the open sea, strikes us with admiration. A little further we pass the beautiful palace of Peterhof, with its delightful gardens, its pleasant park, its fairy-like buildings. After several hours' sail up stream, and after passing the splendid build-

ing appropriated to the mining school, we reach the majestic English quay, where the steamer stops, just opposite to the Exchange.

The delay occasioned by the revision of passports, before which no one is allowed to quit the vessel, and by the subsequent inspection of baggage at the custom-house, is disagreeable, especially as the glimpse one gets of the city excites the strongest desire and most impatient curiosity to examine it more closely. The annoyance of the detention is lessened, however, by the obliging courtesy with which the officials perform their duty, assisting the travellers, after its completion, to repack and arrange their property. If there be any truth in the oft-repeated tales of the horrors of the Russian custom-house, they at least can apply but to the inland frontiers, where, perhaps, Cossack usages still prevail. When entering St. Petersburg by water it is only in cases where information of fraud has been received, that harshness and severity are displayed; otherwise, and as a general rule, the treatment is considerate and humane, and might be substituted with great advantage for the petty annoyance inflicted by the Austrian customs' officers. The customary formalities at an end, it is usually still broad daylight when you reach the interior of the city. Most strangers proceed thither along the quay, across the Isaac Square, by the fine statue of Peter the Great, the imposing building of the Admiralty and the wonderful Isaac Church, to the Newsky Perspective. However much accustomed to Paris and London, the stranger cannot but be struck, impressed and delighted by the spectacle that here presents itself to him; by the remarkable beauty of this street, its immense width, including a double line of carriage ways floored with wood, and foot-paths ten or twelve feet broad—by the magnificent palaces and palatial houses bordering it on either side: by the elegance of the rows of shops, each vying with the other in luxury and richness, fronted with the clearest glass, illumined at night with floods of gaslight, and filled with the most costly objects that luxury and refine ment can devise. Still more is he astonished at the constant stream of life which flows along this great artery of the city; at the throng of passengers on foot and on horseback, in carriages drawn by six and by four horses, in smaller vehicles of every kind, *in droschkis* and *istworstschiks*. If the stranger, extricating himself from this

noisy bustling scene, succeeds in finding accommodation at the Hotel Coulon or the Hotel Demuth, the only foreign hotels in St. Petersburg, he may live there comfortably enough until he can settle himself in more permanent quarters. But if, through want of room at those houses, or ignorance of the locality, he betakes himself to a Russian hotel, he has speedy opportunity of studying one of the most disgraceful sides of life in St. Petersburg. Short of a forest cavern, a foreigner could hardly meet with anything more uninviting and unpleasant than the aspect of one of these caravanserais, or with anything more dismal than its arrangement and distribution. He is ushered into ill-lighted rooms, betraying a sad want of the careful and cleansing hand of a tidy hostess; and where the elegance of the furniture is by no means so great as to make amends for its extreme scantiness. The absence of anything like a bed particularly strikes him. Russian travellers do not miss this, for they invariably carry their own beds about with them, as Maximilian the First carried his coffin, and thus accustom hotel keepers to dispense with beds in their apartments. At last, after many delays, and at the urgent and agonized entreaty of the weary foreigner, such a bed is provided as the German, accustomed to the snug eiderdown of the fatherland, shudders to contemplate. The painful impression of this first reception is but very partially surmounted, when he becomes aware of another cause of discomfort and annoyance. The attendance is simply execrable. In these Russian hotels there is seldom a living creature who can speak anything but Russian; and foreigners are at their wit's end to make themselves understood. There is little hope for English, French, and Italians. Only the German, if his good genius suggests to him to visit the kitchen, may chance to discover there a Finland woman. These are skilful cooks, and most of them speak German. He will hardly get a better supper for this, however; and ultimately will be fain to have recourse to the hospitality of his countrymen resident in St. Petersburg, and which assuredly will never fail him. If the stranger has letters, or even only a single letter, of introduction, which it is natural to suppose will in most instances be the case, he is rescued, immediately on presenting them, from the purgatory of his inn, either by the offer of a room in the friend's house to whom he is recommended or by being pro-

vided with a furnished apartment, of which there are plenty to let in St. Petersburg, chiefly in German houses, and where he will usually find himself very comfortable.

Should any one who reads these lines ever visit St. Petersburg without introduction or acquaintance, let him go to the first wine-house or *restaurateur* he meets with (there is no lack of them), and inspect the bill of fare, upon which the names of eatables and drinkables are inscribed in German as well as in Russian. In such places, too, there is generally an attendant who can speak German. Let the stranger walk in, seat himself at the first unoccupied table he comes to, and order his breakfast in German, and in rather a loud voice. He may be pretty certain that, before he has half finished his repast—and provided he be not too entirely engrossed in its discussion—he will observe some one of the persons present call the waiter, and whisper a few words in his ear. The waiter replies by the same sort of pantomime usually performed by a German court-chamberlain when his royal master asks him why the people do not cheer as he goes by. The *habitué*, having received this shoulder-shrugging answer to his inquiry, seems to consult a moment with his companions, then empties his glass, fills it again, rises from table, approaches the stranger, and greets him as a countryman. Some conversation ensues, and if there be anything in the new comer's mode of speaking, occupation, country, journey, or manner, to inspire the slightest interest, it may safely be wagered that before his interlocutor has emptied his glass, he has invited him to join his party. If, in the intercourse which then follows, he justifies, ever so little, the good opinion which his new acquaintance are well-disposed to entertain of him, he is asked to call upon them, and thenceforward it only depends upon him to consider their houses, if he so pleases, as his own. There is little ceremony used with anybody. A stranger is invited only once to dinner. If he does not please his entertainers, they nevertheless, for that once, endure him with a good and hospitable grace. If, upon the other hand, he makes a favourable impression, on leaving table his host says to him, with a cordial shake of the hand, "Do not wait for another invitation; your knife and fork will be laid here daily, and the oftener you come and use them, the greater the pleasure you will do us." And when this is

said, the guest may feel assured that it is meant literally as spoken. Nor need he ever fear to inconvenience his hospitable entertainers; go when he will, he will be welcome. His place is ready for him: if oysters and champagne are upon table, his host smiles, well-pleased that he has come on a day of good cheer. But though beef and potatoes alone be on the board, the lady of the house betrays not a sign of vexation or embarrassment. *Enough* there always is; how it is managed I know not; but the entrance of half a dozen unforeseen guests neither excites surprise nor occasions inconvenience. On the other hand, however homely the repast, the hostess never deems an apology requisite. What she gives is freely given, and she therefore makes sure that it will be contentedly received. How she would laugh, could she witness, in some German household in Dresden or Berlin, the housewife's deadly agony when her husband unexpectedly brings home from 'Change a friend or two to dinner. Such agony, for such a motive, is unknown in St. Petersburg; unknown, too, there, is the German custom of making trifling presents to servants as often as you take a meal in a friend's house. At Christmas and Easter it is customary to make calls at the houses of your friends, and then money is given to servants, and in handsome amounts; ten or twenty rubles to each, or even more, according to the means and inclination of the donor. If the two customs come much to the same in the end, at any rate that of the Russians is more seemly and convenient.

Conversation at Russian dinner tables is not very striking or diversified. This may be partially accounted for by the separation of the sexes. Be it observed that I here depict the manners of the middle classes. He who desires to learn those of the nobility—not only of Russia, but of the rest of Europe—has only to study the usages of Parisian society, and he then knows those of all other aristocratic societies. In the burgher circles at St. Petersburg, the two sexes usually group themselves very much apart from each other. Even at meals the gentlemen take one half of the table, and the ladies the other. I will not venture exactly to praise such an arrangement, but certainly it spares many an old greybeard, or busy merchant, engrossed with agios and percentages, the trouble of having to entertain a simpering sixteen-year-old neighbour.

The chief subjects of conversation with the ladies of St. Petersburg, at the dinner table, and in the circle they subsequently form round their coffee cups, are music, theatricals, the gossip of the town, a very little literature, and above all, the fashions. On this last subject they are inexhaustible, and truth demands the confession that they do not cultivate a barren soil. They do not, as many a distinguished national assembly has done, waste their time in fruitless theories. Every project devised speedily becomes an accomplished fact; plans are no sooner sketched than carried out; theory quickly blossoms into practice; no undertaking is too difficult, no obstacle insurmountable, no sacrifice too great for these devoted priestesses of the Graces.

Amongst the men at St. Petersburg the talk is of their business, of art, science, and politics. Of the latitude of conversation on this latter subject, we, in Germany, have no idea. Our notion is, that politics are a prohibited topic in the Russian capital. Nor is the notion altogether erroneous, for in public one does not hear them discussed. But did any one hear them discussed publicly in Germany until before the events of March? And did not the places of public amusement in Germany offer a thousand opportunities for their discussion? And in all Austria did any man dare, even in his own house—if there were a few persons collected there—to speak his mind freely? And if by chance, between cheese and dessert, he did allow a candid word or two to escape him on political subjects, did he not, on the servant's entrance, even though the man had been ten years under his roof, bite his lip, and quickly hold his peace?

In St. Petersburg people do not live abroad. Public gardens, boulevards, bazaars, and so forth, are there unknown. There everybody minds his business, and stops in his house; and when the cares and toils of the former are at an end, he does his utmost to transform the latter into a paradise. Freedom is an indispensable condition of such transformation, and of freedom, the Petersburger enjoys, in his own house, an ample measure; not only in the complete liberty of his social life, not only in his complete abandonment to his individual inclinations, but also in respect of political controversies, which in his domestic circle are often carried on with such keenness and unreserve, that the hearer fancies himself transported

into some German republican club. Freedom is far greater in St. Petersburg, in this respect, than is generally supposed. Considering the license of expression indulged in when conversing on political subjects before strangers and servants, it is quite inconceivable that the vigilant police should never have become aware of, or taken umbrage at it; and that there should be no instance on record of a domiciliary visit in the house of a German resident in St. Petersburg. It is probable enough, however, that the authorities are aware of those conversations, but intentionally take no notice of them, knowing the character of Germans, and that, with them,—words do not lead to deeds.

When politics, into which conversation at St. Petersburg usually ends by gliding, have been fairly exhausted, play is resorted to as a pastime. In this the women are in no way behindhand with the men; but, on the contrary, have usually organised their tables of whist, boston, ombrè, or *préférence*, long before the politicians have finished their discussions. *Préférence*, especially, is a favourite game with the St. Petersburg fair ones. With unremitting assiduity they play on from seven or eight in the evening till two in the morning, then sup, and separate at four to get up again at daybreak,—that is to say, according to German time, at nine in the morning; for I here speak of winter parties only, seeing that in summer, at St. Petersburg, there are neither parties nor inhabitants.

When the St. Petersburger has thus introduced a stranger into his house and shown him his domestic interior, the chief subject of his pride, he proceeds to display to him the second thing in which he glories, namely, the beauties of the capital. A day is fixed, the droschki is brought to the door,—few Petersburgers in comfortable circumstances are without an equipage,—and the foreigner is driven all about the town. First, through the Newsky Perspective, already referred to, to the majestic Newsky Convent, where repose the bones of St. Alexander Newsky, which were miraculously cast ashore, so runs the tradition, on the Neva's bank, by the Baltic's tempestuous billows. In costly silver relievos, the hero's exploits are perpetuated upon his coffin. Returning hence, the stranger's guide points out to him, on the left of the Perspective, the Kasan church, one of the most beautiful ornaments of the city. In its front stand four colos-

sal stone statues of apostles, models for four statues of the like gigantic size, which are to be cast in silver. The metal for this purpose is already stored up in the vaults of the Church, and is a pious present from the Cossacks of the Don. On entering the sacred edifice, the eye is at once fettered and dazzled by the magnificence it meets. Pillars, walls, floor, and ceiling, all of the costliest marble; a great barrier, three feet high, and of wrought silver, in front of the sanctuary, and behind it pictures of saints, partly cut out, according to the Russian fashion, and having head, neck, and breast, as well as the frames, studded with precious stones of great price. Various trophies, conquered in the wars with Turks and French, decorate the Church; amongst others, the marshal's baton of Davoust, the sight of which once incited a Frenchman, fanaticised by false patriotism, to commit a church robbery. He was detected; and although the offence is one of those most severely punished in Russia, the authorities contented themselves, in consideration of the extenuating motive, with sending him out of the country.

From the Kasansky you drive through the Morskoy, paved, like the Newsky, with wood, to the *Etât Major**, one of the handsomest buildings in St. Petersburg, opposite to which, on an immense open square, stands the enormous Alexander's Pillar. Thence you proceed to the sumptuous Winter Palace, whence the view over the Neva, Wasili-Ostrow, and the Petersburg bank, is exceedingly fine. Going down the quay, you reach the Champ de Mars, of such vast extent, that I once saw the Emperor pass in review there a body of 80,000 men of all arms. Whoever has had the opportunity of seeing the Russian guards manœuvre, will assuredly hesitate before expressing German contempt of those "barbarous hordes." Several days are requisite for even a superficial examination of the principal sculptural and architectural monuments of the city. Then it is the turn of St. Petersburg's charming environs;—Sarskojè-Sélo, Jelagyn, and Peterhof, the summer residence of the Court, whose beauty borders on the fabulous. Thence comes a visit to Apothecary's Island, with its wonderful botanical garden, in whose immense con-

* *Generalstab*, military headquarters, offices of the staff: in England, the Horse-Guards is the only analogous establishment.—T.

servatories one fancies oneself transported to the tropics. To the intelligent zeal of the court-gardener, Mr. Tellmann, a German, these hot-houses are indebted for a care and development which renders them probably unsurpassed by similar establishments in any country of the world. At any rate, nothing of the kind that I have seen in Potsdam, Vienna, and Paris, can bear comparison with them. From Apothecary's Island you reach Kamini-Ostrow, thence proceed to Petrowsky, and so from one island to another, each surpassing its neighbour in the beauty of its plantations and elegance of its summer villas. Certainly art alone is to be thanked for all this beauty and bloom in the far north of Europe, where nature does nothing; equally certain is it that the glory of these lovely gardens lasts at most but ten or twelve weeks. Not on that account, however, are we to withhold our recognition of the Beautiful, wheresoever we find it; but rather prize and appreciate it the more, because our enjoyment of it is to be so brief. And assuredly the stranger, crossing for the first time the bridge of Kamini-Ostrow, pausing in its centre, and looking right and left at the lovely villas, built in the most graceful Italian style, and embedded in luxuriant vegetation and beauteous flowers, may well imagine, as his astonished gaze wanders over the shores of the arm of the Neva, that he has been suddenly transported to the seductive banks of Arno or of Brenta. These islands are the summer abode of the inhabitants of the capital; where no one, whose business will possibly admit his absence, ever remains between the beginning of June and the end of August. The oppressive heat, combined with the intolerable dust, and, above all, the pestiferous exhalations of the canals, drive every one forth. These canals, of great width, and encased in handsome granite quays, are very ornamental to the city; but they render residence there during the hot season perfect torture. Accordingly, towards the end of May, all make their escape; and if I have already had occasion to praise the hospitality of the town, I must now admit it to be surpassed by that exercised in the country. There it is a common practice for whole families to quarter themselves, unexpected and uninvited, upon their friends and acquaintances, bringing with them their servants, horses, and dogs. They are always heartily welcome, kindly received, and hos-

pitably entertained ; and their departure is sincerely deplored, though it occur only after many weeks' stay. The rural amusements are walks and rides, bathing, bals champêtres, fire-works,—which are let off almost every evening, especially towards the beginning of autumn,—music, singing, somewhat more conversation than in town, because less time is passed at cards, somewhat less reading, because one is almost constantly out of doors. Gambling, however, is not entirely given up, and moreover the abstinence in summer is amply compensated by the winter's excess. With the exception of Mexico, there is assuredly in no place in the world more gambling than here. True, that games of chance are strictly prohibited, and are played neither in public places nor at private clubs; but games of skill, especially *préférence*, are played so abominably high that scarcely an evening passes, in the winter-time, without a few hundred thousand rubles banco exchanging hands at the card-tables of the English club and other establishments of the kind. These profuse and habitual gamblers play, especially the Russians, with wonderful coolness, and with the utmost apparent indifference as to the result.

A circumstance that comes greatly in aid to the hospitality of the Petersburgers, is the abundance of provisions and their consequent cheapness. One can hardly form an idea of the plenty that prevails. On Twelfth Day, when midnight chimes, the peasants of the whole empire set out upon their sledges, well packed with fish, flesh, game, and preserved fruits, which latter are nowhere so well prepared and of such good flavour as in Russia, and repair to the towns, especially to St. Petersburg, often performing journeys of 2000 or 3000 versts. There they usually sell their goods at very advantageous prices, and then, in large caravans, in high spirits, and somewhat elevated by drink, retrace their steps homewards. These journeys, however, take place only in what are called fine winters, by which the Russians understand a steady cold of 20° to 24° Reaumur. Then the sledging paths are firm and smooth; the peasants' little horses, not bigger than a bull of a year and a half old, drag them briskly and without fatigue to the capital, where their eatables arrive fresh and in good order. If, upon the other hand, a thaw sets in, these poor people are greatly to be pitied. The results of their year's toil are inevitably lost to them. And even when it

freezes again directly, so that the provisions reach their journey's end seemingly well preserved, the thaw has nevertheless caused distrust as to the state of the meat, and sale and price are alike diminished. With respect to fish not the slightest deception can take place, for the Russian knows by the very first look at the fish's eye, and by pressing it gently with his finger, whether the fish has been thawed, and if it has he will not purchase it at any price. In remarkably mild winters, when there are frequent intermissions of thaw and frost,—as happened, for instance, in the winter of 1841–2,—the police institute a rigid examination of the provisions before they are allowed to enter the city. And so it came to pass that in that unfortunate winter, many hundreds of sledges were excluded from St. Petersburg, their contents were thrown into the water or buried in the earth, and their unhappy owners had no choice but to sell horse, sledge, and harness, and to retrace on foot, sorrowful and a-hungered, the weary journey to their distant homes. Happily such *bad* (mild) winters are of very rare occurrence. The one I have just referred to, during which the Neva twice thawed and twice again was frozen, was unparalleled in the memory of the oldest man in St. Petersburg.

The cheapness of the principal necessaries of life, such as bread, potatoes, meat, and fish, extends also to the more delicate vegetables, to fruit, and to poultry and the smaller sorts of game (especially a species of partridge, heathcocks, &c.), particularly if one does not run after things which have only just come into season. This explains the abundance observable on the tables of St. Petersburg, even upon those of the middle classes. Fuel is also very cheap, and rents, compared with those demanded in Vienna and other capitals, are by no means high. I lived in the Stalerney-Perulok, one of the most lively streets in St. Petersburg, in a very large handsome house. I had the best floor, which there means the second floor; the first floor of St. Petersburg houses being disagreeable owing to deficiency of light and the noise from the street. My apartments consisted of a large drawing-room with a balcony, and four other highly comfortable rooms, besides corridor, kitchen, loft and cellar. The rent I paid was 1,300 rubles banco (not quite 45*l.* sterling). In Vienna the same accommodation would certainly cost twice as

much. My expense for fuel during the whole of the long winter of St. Petersburg—where, as is well known, the stoves are arranged so as to heat, besides the dwelling rooms, kitchen, passage, hall and staircase—amounted to no more than 200 rubles, or less than 7*l.* sterling; whereas in Vienna, with much less space to heat, I paid the same sum every two months the winter through. And those who are satisfied to burn nothing but coals will hardly be at a third of the expense. Thus we see that rent is certainly not dear, and that the ordinary necessaries of life are decidedly cheap. But very costly, upon the other hand, are all objects of luxury, particularly those manufactured in foreign countries. Men's clothes, and more particularly women's clothes, are made in St. Petersburg even better than in London and Paris; the fashions of course coming from the latter places, and being most conscientiously imitated by the Russian artists. But they are enormously dear, as are all kinds of dress, millinery, and ornaments, and as are also French wines and books. The dealers in these last, for instance, reckon the Prussian dollar as equivalent to the silver ruble, which is at once an addition of six or seven per cent. to the price, and moreover, lay on a profit of twenty-five and often thirty-three per cent. By these exorbitant charges the sale of books is much injured. Foreign wines in general are anything but cheap, especially champagne, the regular price of which is three silver rubles a bottle, or more than half as dear again as in Germany; and what makes this expense still more felt is the extravagant use of that wine. The first thing that a Russian places before a stranger is champagne, and as the German is of an imitative nature, and this custom flatters alike his palate and his vanity, the use of the luxury is carried to profusion. An effort has been made to substitute a Russian product for this expensive drink; and a wine is fabricated out of the excellent grapes of the Crimea which is called Russian champagne, and which exactly resembles the original as far as colour and effervescence go. But there the likeness ends. In flavour the difference is so notable that the Russian sets the Crimean wine only before those guests whom he does not desire again to receive, but the repetition of whose visits the sacred laws of hospitality forbid him to decline.

CHAPTER II.

THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS.

THE name of the Emperor Nicholas is at this day as inseparable from that of Russia as is the idea of the sun from that of daylight. The comparison may be carried farther; for, whatever now thrives and ripens in the intellectual and material domain of Russia, is indebted for its growth to the vivifying beams of the imperial sun, imparting warmth and life to dead matter. Hence we get to comprehend the erroneous judgment which attributes to the same influence evil as well as good, and especially the continued duration of a state of things which is undoubtedly, in some respects, deeply to be deplored, and which, measured by the German standard, appears perfectly horrible and revolting. It is but the few who know to what extent the bounteous hand of the Czar pours healing balm into the gaping wounds of his country; and, of those few, but a very few are open to conviction of the fact.

Let me devote a few lines to a brief investigation, founded upon facts.

The rights of man are trampled under foot in Russia! Who denies it? A nation, still semi-barbarous, is subjected to a semi-barbarous rule! Perfectly true. Laws unworthy of the name exist there, as well as classes of men degraded below the proper dignity of man. All this is matter of fact; but the profound genius of the Emperor, who discerns all this, his restless striving to remedy these evils, to reconcile these incongruities,—*that* stamps him in my eyes, not only as a great sovereign, but also as a true friend of the people.

It is with real gratification that I oppose, in these pages, a true and faithful representation of facts to a prejudice universal in Germany — a prejudice often confirmed and strengthened by Germans who have long resided in Russia. It is not my fault if those Germans either were unable to take a clear-sighted view of what passed around them, or else measured it with a German rule — a mode of measurement of which Russian matters certainly do not admit. The man who rigidly investigates, and takes into due consideration, the

character of the people, the confirmed habits of centuries, the perils and material disadvantages of the too-sudden development of free institutions, will not only contemplate with respect and admiration the efforts of the Russian government for the safe and gradual spread of liberty, but will also, like myself, not hesitate to proclaim the Emperor Nicholas—so often denounced as a deadly foe to freedom—the true father of his country, earnestly striving to develope and mature the rights of his subjects.

Proofs strike deeper than assertions, and a few of the former may here with propriety be given. Let us first glance at that institution which most estranges Russia from civilization—namely, at the institution of serfdom.

For the female members of this class there is but one legal path to emancipation: namely, marriage with a freeman. For male serfs, at all times until recently, military service was the only avenue to freedom. Once under the colours, the soldier is free. The freedom of the Russian soldier is not very comprehensive, and the recruit may in some sort be said only to exchange one kind of slavery for another and a milder one; but when, on the completion of his term of service, or in consequence of wounds or ill-health, he receives his discharge, it is as a free man that he returns to his home. In strict regard to truth, I must, however, here observe, that, for a long time, this road to citizenship led but few to its enjoyment. The soldier, after completing a period of twenty years' service, was so accustomed to that mode of life, whilst on the other hand, owing to his long disuse of the occupation to which he had been brought up, he saw so little prospect of earning a living, that in most instances he accepted a second bounty, and recommenced his military career, to which he then clung till death or the hospital received him. Seven years ago, however, the Emperor Nicholas shortened the term of service to eight years; a reduction which now annually restores to civil life many thousand free men, who were slaves until they donned the uniform. At the expiration of his eight years' service, the soldier is still a young man; he can still enjoy his freedom, and found a free family. For this first and important step towards the emancipation of the serf, the Russian people have to thank the love of liberty of the Emperor Nicholas.

A not less important disposition, aimed at the same end, and at the same time calculated to avert the total ruin of the Russian nobility, is that which relates to advances made by the Crown on territorial property.

To prevent the partial depopulation of estates, a ukase, dated in 1827, declared the serfs to constitute an integral and inseparable portion of the soil. The immediate consequence of this decree was the cessation, at least in its most repulsive form, of the degrading traffic in human flesh, by sale, barter, or gift. Thenceforward no serf could be transferred to another owner, except by the sale of the land to which he belonged. To secure to itself the refusal of the land and the human beings appertaining to it, and at the same time to avert from the landholder the ruin consequent on dealings with usurers, the government established an imperial loan-bank, which made advances on mortgage of lands to the extent of two-thirds of their value. The borrowers had to pay back each year three per cent. of the loan, besides three per cent. interest. If they failed to do this, the Crown returned them the instalments already paid, gave them the remaining third of the value of the property, and took possession of the land and its population. This was the first stage of freedom for the serfs. They became Crown peasants, held their dwellings and bit of land as an hereditary fief from the Crown, and paid annually for the same a sum total of five rubles (about four shillings for each male person); a rent for which, assuredly, in the whole of Germany, the very poorest farm is not to be had; to say nothing of the consideration that in case of bad harvests, destruction by hail, disease, &c., the Crown is bound to supply the strict necessities of its peasants, and to find them in daily bread, in the indispensable stock of cattle and seed corn, to repair their habitations, and so forth.

By this arrangement, and in a short time, a considerable portion of the lands of the Russian nobility became the property of the State, and with it a large number of serfs became Crown peasants. This was the first and most important step towards opening the road to freedom to that majority of the Russian population which consists of slaves.

When in this manner the first ideas of liberty had been awaken-

ed in the people, the Emperor, in the exercise of his own unlimited and irresponsible power, took a second step, not less pregnant with consequences than the first. Unable suddenly to grant civil freedom to the serfs, he bestowed upon them, as a transition stage, certain civil rights. A ukase permitted them to enter into contracts. Thereby was accorded to them not only the right of possessing property, but the infinitely higher blessing of a legal recognition of their moral worth as men. Hitherto the serf was recognised by the State only as a sort of beast in human form. He could hold no property, give no legal evidence, take no oath. No matter how eloquent his speech, he was dumb before the law. He might have treasures in his dwelling, the law knew him only as a pauper. His word and honour were valueless compared to those of the vilest freeman. In short, morally he could not be said to exist. The Emperor Nicholas gave to the serfs, that vast majority of his subjects, the first sensation of moral worth, the first throb of self-respect, the first perception of the rights and dignity and duty of man! What professed friend of the people can boast to have done more, or yet so much, for so many millions of men?

But the Czar did not rest satisfied with this. Having given the serfs power to hold property, he taught them to prize the said property above all in the interest of their freedom. It seems quite like a jest to speak thus of the "tyrant and bloody-minded man;" but I speak in all seriousness, and the facts are there to prove my words. The serf could not buy his own freedom, but he became free by the purchase of the patch of soil to which he was linked. To such purchase the right of contract cleared his road. The lazy Russian, who worked with an ill will towards his master, doing as little as he could for the latter's profit, toiled day and night for his own advantage. Idleness was replaced by the diligent improvement of his farm, brutal drunkenness by frugality and sobriety; the earth, previously neglected, requited the unwonted care with its richest treasures. By the magic of industry, wretched hovels were transformed into comfortable dwellings, wildernesses into blooming fields, desolate steppes and deep morasses into productive land; whole communities, lately sunk in poverty, exhibited unmistakable signs of competency and well-doing. The serfs, now allowed to enter into

contracts, lent the lord of the soil the money of which he often stood in need, on the same conditions as the Crown, receiving in security the land they occupied, their own bodies, and the bodies of their wives and children. The nobleman preferred the serfs' loan to the government's loan, because, when pay-day came for the annual interest and instalment, the Crown, if he was not prepared to pay, took possession of his estate, having funds wherewith to pay him the residue of its value. The parish of serfs, which had lent money to its owner, lacked these funds. Pay-day came, the debtor did not pay, but neither could the serfs produce the one-third of the value of the land which they must disburse to him in order to be free. Thus they lost their capital and did not gain their liberty. But Nicholas lived! the father of his subjects.

Between the anxious debtor and the still more anxious creditor now interposed an imperial ukase, which in such cases opened to the parishes of serfs the imperial treasury. Mark this; for it is worthy to be noted: the Russian imperial treasury was opened to the serfs that they might purchase their freedom!

The Government might simply have released the creditors from their embarrassment by paying the debtor the one-third still due to him, and then land and tenants belonged to the state;—one parish the more of *Crown Peasants.* Nicholas did not adopt that course. He lent the serfs the money they needed to buy themselves from their master, and for this loan (a third only of the value) they mortgaged themselves and their lands to the Crown, paid annually three per cent. interest and three per cent. of the capital, and would thus in about thirty years be free, and proprietors of their land! That they would be able to pay off this third was evident, since, to obtain its amount, they had still the same resources which enabled them to save up the two-thirds already paid. Supposing, however, the very worst,—that through inevitable misfortunes, such as pestilence, disease of cattle, &c., they were prevented satisfying the rightful claims of the Crown, in that case the Crown paid them back the two-thirds value which they had previously disbursed to their former owner, and they became a parish of Crown Peasants, whose lot, compared to their earlier one, was still enviable. But not once

in a hundred times do such cases occur, whilst, by the above plan, whole parishes gradually acquire their freedom, not by a sudden and violent change, which could not fail to have some evil consequences, but in course of time, after a probation of labour and frugality, and after thus attaining to the knowledge that without these two great factors of true freedom, no real liberty can possibly be durable.

I cherish a steadfast belief, that the reader, who perhaps took up these pages with a previously formed contrary opinion, will here lay them down in astonishment, if not converted from his views, at least staggered in them; and perhaps will ask why, if the emperor so earnestly desires the freedom of his people, why he does not—he to whom nothing is impossible and who has the right as well as the power—confer it upon them by a stroke of his pen, instead of wearily prolonging his work, and spreading it out over so many years, to say nothing of the thousand eventualities which may occur to destroy it before it is complete? The answer is plain. The great man who is carrying out this reformation—no, let us call it by its right name, this peaceful Revolution,—who is pursuing, by carefully prepared roads, his plans for the abolition of existing abuses, has chosen, in his wisdom, which is equal to his love, the longer path, because it is not only the sure one, but the *only* sure one. In the first place, he recoils with dismay from the injustice, without which so enormous an encroachment on the rights of property could not be accomplished. Not less does he apprehend the abuse of the suddenly bestowed freedom, for which Russia is still less ripe than other civilized countries, which nevertheless have proved themselves unable to withstand its inseparable temptations, and have derived nothing but misery from measures which, wisely applied, would have led them to prosperity and happiness. Fruits can but gradually ripen, and this is also true of freedom, that noblest fruit in the garden of life. The Baltic provinces, where serfdom no longer exists, were liberated by this same process, by which the rest of Russia will not fail to attain the same desirable object. Every man is ripe for freedom when he is fresh from the hands of nature: after a serfdom of centuries he is *not* ripe for it.

"Vor dem freien Manne erzittre nicht!
Doch vor dem Sklaven, wenn er die Kette zerbricht!"*

So sang the poet of the nineteenth century. In the sixteenth (1586) King Stephen Bathory, of Poland, experienced the truth of the sentiment. Moved by the whining entreaties of the Livonian peasants, he wrote to the nobles to substitute fines for corporal punishment, whereupon the peasants themselves rebelled, *because they were no longer beaten.* Theories are excellent in the study; the happiness of nations is best secured by measures founded on actual and practical experience.

But what would our ardent anti-Russians say, if I took them into the interior of the empire, gave them an insight into the organisation of parishes, and showed them, to their infinite astonishment, what they never yet dreamed of, that the whole of that organisation is based upon republican principles, that there every thing has its origin in election by the people, and that that was already the case at a period when the great mass of German democrats did not so much as know the meaning of popular franchise. Certainly the Russian serfs do not know at the present day what it means; but without knowing the name of the thing, without having ever heard a word of Lafayette's ill-omened "*trône monarchique, environné d'institutions républicaines,*" they choose their own elders, their administrators, their dispensers of justice and finance, and never dream that they, *slaves*, enjoy and benefit by privileges by which some of the most civilised nations have proved themselves incapable of profiting.

Space does not here permit a more extensive sketch of what the Emperor Nicholas has done, and still is daily doing, for the true freedom of his subjects; but what I have here brought forward must surely suffice to place him, in the eyes of every unprejudiced person, in the light of a real lover of his people. That his care has created a paradise—that no highly criminal abuse of power, no shameful neglect prevails in the departments of justice and police—it is hoped no reflecting reader will infer from this exposition of

* Tremble not before the freeman, but before the slave who has broken his chain!

facts. But the still-existing abuses alter nothing in my view of the Emperor's character, of his assiduous efforts to raise his nation out of the deep slough in which it still is partly sunk, of his efficacious endeavours to elevate his people to a knowledge and use of their rights as men—alter nothing in my profound persuasion that Czar Nicholas I. is the true father of his country.

CHAPTER III.

THE FESTIVAL AT PETERHOF, AND A MILITARY REVIEW.

THE summer residences of the imperial family are in the highest degree delightful. That of Sarskojé-Sélo is the one to which the court usually first repairs, remaining there from the beginning of spring to the commencement of June. Thence they go to Peterhof, till September, then to Jelagyn, and then back again to Sarskojé-Sélo, returning, most years, to St. Petersburg on the 9th of November. The stately buildings of these summer palaces are surrounded with statues and monuments, and with delightful gardens, shrubberies, and plantations, wandering amongst which one feels suddenly transported from the icy north to some genial southern zone. Peterhof is the palace that most interests strangers. Its situation is peculiarly charming. Standing northward from St. Petersburg, at the mouth of the Neva, opposite to Cronstadt, which is plainly discernible from its windows through a telescope of moderate power, the view on that side is imposing by reason of the grand scale of the landscape. On the opposite side a different scene presents itself; there the eye reposes upon rich verdure and abundant foliage, or contemplates with delight the thousand hues of the flowers that fill the parterres and overhang the paths. Peterhof is, nevertheless, but little visited by the Petersburgers. Only on the 1st of July (old style) amends are made to this charming summer abode for the neglect to which it is doomed during the rest of the year. On that day—the 13th of July of our style—which is the Empress's birthday, and also her wedding-day, the people of

St. Petersburg throng in vast and motley multitudes to the renowned Peterhof Festival. It is difficult to give an idea of the immense concourse that flows thither. From the earliest hour of the morning, the Neva is covered with steamboats, skiffs, and gondolas, and the roads with vehicles of every kind, full of eager holiday-makers, fearless of the dust so long as they reach the scene of enjoyment. There the accommodation prepared for them cannot possibly suffice. Enormous tents are pitched to afford rest and refreshment to the weary wayfarers; but so extraordinary is the throng, that it is scarcely possible to keep a place even if obtained; or else the heat drives one from under cover, to mingle and be carried along with the dense stream that fills every avenue. Hurrying from room to room, and from one garden into another, the morning passes away, and at noon the Empress appears on the balcony of the palace, and a military parade ensues. After the troops have defiled before her, the orderlies of the various corps march by, amongst which the Circassians are remarkable for their personal appearance, costume, and skill in military exercises. After the parade, which has been preceded by divine service, a court drawing-room is usually held; then comes a drive through the park, and then dinner, succeeded, towards eight in the evening, by a ball in the palace. To this ball every one, without exception, is welcome. The country people, in their ordinary garb, mingle with the wearers of elegant dresses and brilliant uniforms; a mixture which, however, in no way diminishes the universal enjoyment. Suddenly the musicians strike up; through the folding doors, thrown wide open, two chamberlains enter, and with the utmost courtesy entreat the assemblage to make room for their Majesties, who are near at hand. Every one draws back, as much as the throng and pressure permit, and the Polonaise is danced, with the Emperor at its head, through all the extensive suite of apartments. All have thus an opportunity of seeing their sovereigns, and all greet them joyfully as they pass, until the royal dancers, retracing their steps, conclude the dance in the same hall wherein they commenced it.

At a signal from the Empress, the whole of the vast garden is now suddenly illuminated. This takes place as by enchantment. With lightning speed the countless flames ascend from the lowest

branches to the very topmost sprigs of the trees. In less than a quarter of an hour, park and garden appear in a blaze. The waters of the fountains plash and ripple over steps which seem to burn. Lamps, ingeniously sheltered from extinction, gleam through the falling water, whose every drop glitters, diamond-like, with all the tints of the prism. Eye cannot behold a more striking and beautiful scene. The finest sight of all is the "Golden Staircase," next to the "Hercules," fountains with which even the *Grandes Eaux* at Versailles cannot be compared. And now imagine the effect of the monster illumination, reflected on all sides in the colossal cascades and waterworks, and in the adjacent arm of the sea; imagine the melodious murmur of music, issuing from the palace, and mingled with the whizzing of rockets, with the booming of cannon from the vessels at Cronstadt, and with the joyous songs of countless groups, who, having selected spots for their bivouac, lie around the fires in various and picturesque attire. All these things combine to render this one of the most beautiful festivals that can be imagined.

At ten o'clock the ball ends; after which the court usually take a little drive on a sort of long droschkis (jaunting cars). On their return in-doors, the lights in the palace are suddenly extinguished. Gradually the walks are deserted by the promenaders, who establish themselves for the night under tents or beneath waggons, or round great watch-fires; departing with the first dawn, by land and by water, to their respective homes. Thus ends the great holiday at Peterhof, unquestionably one of the grandest and most agreeable of popular festivals.

Next to the Peterhof festival, there are few things better worth visiting than a review at St. Petersburg. One is usually held every spring by the Emperor, before his departure for the country, on the Champ de Mars. This "Field of Mars" is an immense plain situated between the summer garden and the barracks of the foot-guards, towards the north, hard by the Treutzky bridge, and will contain with ease eighty thousand men, who there defile before the Emperor. He who has derived his sole knowledge of the Russian soldier from the sort of accounts usually given in German papers, will be astonished at sight of these pattern troops. More thorough

soldiers are not to be found. Their bodies are inured to hardship, their discipline is the strictest and most exact, in the practice of their profession they are zealous and earnest. Uniformity of dress and equipment is carried out in the minutest details; that of the cavalry, espescially with respect to the horses, has no parallel in the world. One sees whole regiments of dragoons mounted on great strong black horses, all exactly the same height, without a single white hair, and so much alike as to be scarcely distinguishable from each other. The same is the case with other regiments, which ride all brown or all chesnut horses; and I saw the same in a hussar regiment, mounted, to a man, on dapple greys. And then the Circassians, those models of manly beauty—knightly figures, cased in steel, their features bronzed by the sun of their native mountains, their lofty forms lean but muscular, their dark eyes flashing from beneath their iron helms, their broad chests protected by shirts of mail, mounted upon horses which they cherish and watch over as they might a sister or child; truly this corps is the very *beau-idéal* of all cavalry. The Circassian does not *ride* his horse to review or parade; he has him *led* thither, lest his rider's weight should make him sweat. On the parade ground he is again rubbed down, his hoofs are painted black, and every speck of dust is carefully blown off his coat. Then only does the rider spring into his saddle, and easy is it to discern how proud he is of his steed and how proud his steed of him. Now off they set at a headlong gallop, over hedge and over ditch, and the same man who, a minute before, would have feared to injure his steed by too hard a pressure of hand or currycomb, spares him as little, until he again dismounts, as though he were riding the greatest screw under the sun. Yes! those Circassians *are* the best cavalry in the world. And now behold that artillery, those horses and harness, the elegance and lightness of the gun-carriages and ammunition waggons, the accuracy of the exercises, the endurance and indefatigableness of the men, and their splendid discipline! In this last particular all the Russian troops are alike, from the Cossacks, who, in obedience to orders, covered Eylau's bridge with their bodies, to the sentries at the burning Winter Palace, who, in defiance of the glowing heat, would not leave their posts until regularly relieved. I am less ac-

quainted with the troops of the line, and here speak only of the guards. These are, indeed, a picked and choice body of men. At the same time, it must be mentioned, they are admirably well cared for. Every man has his three complete uniforms, gets his meat, bread, and pay, and moreover his share of the *artell*, which greatly improves his diet. This means that, wherever troops are quartered for any length of time, certain tracts of land are allotted to their use. These they cultivate in their leisure hours, and grow potatoes and cabbages. By a very trifling subscription from their pay they get a capital mess. They are also bound to contribute to the mess-fund a certain per-centage of whatever they earn by non-military services, such as appearing on the stage at theatres, in plays when soldiers are required, transporting furniture for people who are changing their houses, cutting wood, and so forth. These contributions swell the fund considerably, and conjointly with the produce of the garden, afford them excellent meals. The Russian troops are exceedingly well nourished.

Particular attention is paid to the lodging and cleanliness of the soldier, as well as to his food. The barracks at St. Petersburg are roomy, handsome, palace-like buildings, well suited to promote the health and comfort of their inmates. Almost superior to the barracks are the military hospitals, which combine arrangements admirably adapting them to the purpose for which they are designed, with the most careful nursing and skilful medical treatment of the sick. There is no danger of negligence on the part of any of the officials there employed; for they never know at what time the Emperor may surprise them by a visit, and that apprehension makes them zealous in their duty. Thus in illness, as in health, the soldiers are well cared for; and as the garrison is very strong, the guard-duty is by no means oppressively severe.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PRIVATE HOUSES.

THE arsenal and docks of Cronstadt must be included amongst the finest public works of St. Petersburg; and after them the attention of the stranger is forcibly arrested by the multitude of splendid churches and public buildings of all kinds, the Winter Palace being prominent amongst the latter. I shall not weary my readers by a dry and detailed account of things which they may find better described in any guide-book. I will but pause a moment at the public hospitals, selecting especially that of Abuchow, which I had special opportunities of inspecting through the kindness of one of its directors, Counsellor Götte, who was distinguished alike as physician, administrator, and man; but who now, unhappily, is no more. These St. Petersburg hospitals strike the visitor so forcibly at a first glance, by their extreme cleanliness and convenience, that he is unavoidably prepossessed with a most favourable idea of the treatment experienced there by the sick. This treatment is, indeed, so excellent, the care and attendance so first-rate, that I do not hesitate earnestly to advise such strangers as may be thrown upon their own resources in St. Petersburg—living at hotels or in furnished apartments—to take refuge, in case of illness, in one of the public hospitals. There, at a very reasonable rate, they may obtain a room and attendance for themselves, such as they assuredly could not obtain—especially the attendance—in any other way. Whilst speaking of hospitals, I must not omit to mention an establishment which, above all others, excited my strong sympathy. This is a private hospital for complaints of the eyes and ears. It belongs to Dr. Charles Frederick Strauch, a physician celebrated for his skill in the treatment of those classes of disease, and who may be styled, with strict justice, the Kramer of St. Petersburg. Dr. Strauch, a man of property and high reputation, who is frequently sent for to Moscow, and even as far as Kiew, to perform important operations, and who has an immense practice at St. Petersburg, founded this hospital out of his own private means, and devoted two-thirds of the

accommodation it contains to poor sick persons, who are there taken care of without charge. If we bear in mind that, at St. Petersburg, most complaints have a tendency, in consequence of the great dust in summer, to fall upon the eyes, and that ear-diseases are nowhere more plentiful than amongst the lower classes of Russians—a consequence of the lavish and imprudent use of vapour-baths,—there is no difficulty in believing that the free places in this hospital are constantly full, and that a host of applicants are always down for the first vacancies. The patients are supplied not only with medical advice and with medicine, but also with attendance, fire and light, food and drink, and even with linen, and with books to read, all gratis. Physicians get very highly paid at St. Petersburg; but though the rooms reserved for patients who pay were constantly full, and though these patients remunerated their doctor at the highest rate, this still would far from suffice to cover even the larger part of the expense which the free places occasion. The hospital is situated in the Wosnischensky, a perfectly healthy part of the city, where there is abundance of light and of fresh air. The cost of the medicines is lightened to the founder of the hospital by his brother, the druggist, Alexander Strauch, vulgarly known as "Moses," whose pharmacy is at the corner of Balschoi-Mechansky and Garochovoy, and who has an agreement with his brother to supply him with drugs gratis, up to a certain amount, for the free portion of his hospital, he being paid for those consumed in the other portion. All honor to these worthy brothers, who thus nobly and unselfishly devote time, means, and talents, to their suffering fellow men! And double honour is due to them, for they extend their benevolence without distinction of nations, to all, from whatsoever land they come, who need their aid. It does the heart good to be able to record such generosity and benevolence on the part of two of one's own countrymen.

The style of building of the St. Petersburg houses is peculiar, very suitable, but expensive. Although building materials—stone, wood, iron,—are there infinitely cheaper than in Germany, houses yet cost much more. In St. Petersburg the owner of a stone house is looked upon as a man well off in the world. The term "stone," used as a distinction from "wooden," will soon fall into disuse, for in the heart of the city there are scarcely any wooden houses remain-

ing, and in streets more distant from the centre they will gradually quite disappear, substantial and extensive repairs of such houses being no longer permitted. When these become necessary, the owners are bound to take down the houses and rebuild them of stone. The expensiveness of building arises from high wages, and from the great solidity of the buildings. St. Petersburg is built partly on swampy and partly on sandy ground; houses of any size require, therefore, enormous foundations. When one reflects that, a century ago, a bottomless morass existed where now stands the mighty Kasansky Cathedral, a morass which swallowed whole forests of trees before the erection of so colossal a monument could be ventured upon, one marvels at the boldness of the mind which could plan and carry out the erection of such a city on such a spot. Even as the idea of its foundation originated with Peter the Great, so was he also the animating spirit at the carrying out of the plan. He resolved to found an immense commercial city, a second Amsterdam; he would have his merchantmen, freighted in India, discharge their cargoes in the heart of his capital at the door of his merchants' warehouses. Direct from the vessel's hold should the bales of rich eastern produce be craned up into the store. With this view did he plan the three broad and proportionably deep canals which intersect St. Petersburg in every direction. During their construction the Czar made a journey to Holland; on his return he went, with Menzikoff, to whom the superintendence of the works had been intrusted, to inspect their progress. On reaching the "Blue Bridge," where now stands the Duke of Leuchtenberg's recently erected magnificent palace, he found himself deceived in his expectations. The whole design of the canals was completely spoiled, all his grand plans knocked upon the head. Foaming with rage, but without a word of reproach, he grasped his inseparable companion, his trusty *dubina* and vigorously applied the cane to his minister's shoulders until he was fain to give over from pure exhaustion. The minister stood erect and immovable to receive his thrashing from his angry master. When Peter's fury had cooled down a little, he resigned himself to what could not be helped; embraced Menzikoff and kissed him, in sign of reconciliation, upon both cheeks; after which they got into their carriage and drove away. The gaping populace, who

had witnessed this startling although not unprecedented scene, at once gave to the spot upon which it had occurred the name of the "Kiss Bridge," and such is the popular mode of styling the bridge even at the present day.

Although Peter's grand project with respect to the canals was thus frustrated, they nevertheless are a great ornament to the city, and an important assistance to traffic and trade. It is, in point of salubrity however, that they are of the greatest value. They drain off the moisture from the marshy soil, and it is owing to them that St. Petersburg is so healthy a place to live in.

When new houses are built, the authorities exercise the utmost vigilance to see that the foundations are properly laid. If the obligation of deep and massive foundations considerably augments the cost of building in St. Petersburg, a still heavier expense is incurred by the necessity of making the walls of great thickness. With the thin walls of Germany one could not exist in a St. Petersburg house. Russian walls are at least four times as thick as ours. The same remark applies to the iron work, which in Russia is wrought very elegantly, but also of great strength and durability. The possessors of wooden houses exchange them but very unwillingly for stone ones; setting aside the difference of cost, the former are warmer and more comfortable. This seems incredible, but such is the fact. The interstices of the timbers in wooden houses are so tightly stopped with moss, which is also stuffed in behind the well-papered wainscots, that the thickest stone walls cannot compare with them for warmth. For duration, of course, there can be no doubt on which side the advantage is, and the risk of fire constitutes the strongest of all arguments against the wooden houses.

Building being so expensive in St. Petersburg, the government steps in to the aid of private enterprise. If a builder has but the means to get the roof on a house, he may then have an estimate made, according to the plan he has drawn out, of the value of the house when it shall be complete, and may obtain from the crown, as an advance, two-thirds of the amount. These two-thirds often exceed the sum he has as yet laid out upon the building. He binds himself to pay annually four per cent. interest and four per cent. of the capital until extinction of the debt, the said interest and instal

ment being all along calculated on the amount of the original loan, so that, if the payments are regularly made, the whole debt is cancelled in about twenty years. In this manner many industrious men, especially Germans, have enriched themselves; for if they have a business or employment sufficient to live upon, and a very small sum wherewith to begin building, they easily obtain sufficient credit to build the walls of the house and get the roof on them. These debts they then pay off by means of the government advance, and, the house once complete, the rent they draw from it enables thom to pay interest and instalments, which together amount only to eight per cent. The taxes are barely one per cent.; during the first twenty years of a house's existence no important repairs are required; and it must be a badly-letting house indeed that does not yield, in any moderately good situation, at least ten per cent. on the capital expended.

Amongst the best and richest shops in St. Petersburg are provision shops—somewhat resembling our Italian warehouses—where an immense variety of edibles and potables, the choicest spices and most expensive wines, delicacies of every kind, as well as butter, cheese, and other common articles of consumption, are exposed for sale. Goods to the amount of many millions of rubles, are heaped up in these shops, most of whose keepers, themselves *millionnaires*, are serfs of Count Scheremetiew, in whose name the business is carried on, since by Russian law no serf can trade. When they began business they were aided by the count's money and credit, and in return they pay an annual poll-tax, in like manner with the serfs who till the ground, and with those who, by their owner's permission, take service or employment in the towns. Five rubles (four or five shillings) was the yearly sum they paid, when they first set up their shops, for each male—women being exempt from the impost. They pay the same and no more now that they roll in wealth, inhabit sumptuous mansions, and drive in elegant carriages.

By the Russian laws every female serf is free as soon as married to a free man; on the other hand, marriage with a serf entails serfdom on a free woman. On a certain day one of Count Scheremetiew's rich bondsmen appeared before his lord to petition for the freedom of a son. The young man was in love with a poor but free

maiden, who returned his affection, but who would not sacrifice her liberty to her love. The father offered eighty thousand rubles as the price of his son's happiness. The count accepted, and desired his vassal to produce the money. In an instant it was paid over. Letters of emancipation were forthwith drawn up, and the count delivered them to the delighted father, with the words, "You must let me be the bride's man." When, in this capacity, the count had conducted the bride from the altar to her husband's house, and had handed her, according to Russian custom, upon a silver waiter, the first glass of champagne, he presented to her, as a bridal gift, a bouquet of fresh flowers, skilfully arranged round a small packet containing the eighty thousand rubles. It was his pride to have wealthy men as serfs, but their wealth had no attractions for him.

In warm weather, refuge from the noise, and dust, and from the exhalations of the canals, is sought in the numerous villas that surround St. Petersburg on all sides. It is rather remarkable that the finest of these country residences and gardens are all to the north of the city. This, however, is explicable by the situation of the numerous islands formed by the various arms of the Neva as it flows northwards from St. Petersburg. The nearest agreeable summer abode is Apothecary's Island, not far from and on the way to Kammenoje-Ostrow, and at a distance of about three versts from the Isaac's Bridge. A vast number of delightful gardens and villas, and of admirably arranged hot-houses, give an enchanting aspect to this island. Separated from it by an arm of the Neva is Kammenoje-Ostrow, the most magnificent of all the islands, in respect both of parks and buildings. Here, close upon the river's bank, stands the summer palace of the Grand Duchess Helena, widow of the lamented Grand Duke Michael. It is surrounded by a fine garden, which, however, like her garden in St. Petersburg, is not open to the public. Kammenoje-Ostrow also boasts of a very pretty theatre, in which, during the residence of the court, the French company give frequent performances, an honour which is not accorded to any other theatrical company.

Quitting Kammenoje-Ostrow, one reaches,—the road lying partly through a very agreeable park,—the property of the Countess Stroganoff, which bears her name. Two fine buildings, in the

Gothic style of architecture, stand in the midst of a garden, at no great distance from the high road, whence they have a very beautiful appearance. Before my journey to St. Petersburg, I heard a great deal of the celebrated Stroganoff gardens, but with the exception of this one, I was never able to discover any.

The Stroganoffs are not only one of the most illustrious of Russian noble families, but they are also enormously rich, have vast estates and a very considerable number of serfs, with which latter they are extremely fortunate. True it is, that this family have the custom to treat their serfs with particular care, to educate them well, and to foster every indication of talent that manifests itself amongst them. One of the consequences of this is that almost all the inspectors, accountants, overseers, &c., of the surrounding estates are their serfs, and sre such faithful and trustworthy servants, that the property under their care is distinguished before most others for prosperity and good management. The most careful education cannot confer genius, but it may sometimes assist its development; and for at least one man of genius, the world is indebted to the serfs of the Stroganoff family. The architect who drew the plan of one of the most remarkable buildings in St. Petersburg was a serf of Count Stroganoff's, who gave him his liberty as a recognition of his rare talent.

The edifice in question is no other than the Kasansky, the cathedral of the Holy Virgin of Kasan. It is a very astonishing, and indeed one of the most imposing, buildings of its class. Two circular colonnades, similar to those in front of St. Peter's at Rome, lead to the entrance of the church, which is adorned with colossal statues. In the interior of the cathedral are fifty-six columns, each one of which is hewn out of a single block of dark marble, and beautifully polished. They are fifty-two feet high, and the Corinthian capitals surmounting them are beautifully carved and richly gilt. In corresponding taste are all the other ornaments of the church. Walls and flooring are of polished marble, and the various pictures are adorned with a profusion of precious stones really dazzling to the eyes. Prominent amongst them is the picture of the Virgin and Child, which is literalpy covered with diamonds, sapphires, and emeralds of the rarest beauty. This picture, to

which the church is indebted for its name, was brought from Kasan to Moscow by command of Ivan Vasiliewitsch. Peter the Great carried it away from Moscow to adorn his new capital, which he placed under its guardianship and protection. The treasures of this church would alone suffice to cover the cost of six Hungarian campaigns.

If we seriously contemplate and minutely examine this sublime piece of architecture, and call to mind that not only all its materials are extracted from the soil of Russia, but also that it is pure Russian art and industry, unaided by foreign hands, which have executed the great work, we shall feel disposed to judge, more justly than is often done, both the country and its people, and to abate somewhat of any preconceived notions we may have formed of their barbarous condition.

At no great distance from the Kasansky, at the end of the Perspective, upon a vast open square which derives its name from the church in its centre, stands another still more imposing, really gigantic monument, one of the greatest and most spacious upon the face of the earth, namely, the Isaac's Church. I abstain from repeating, with respect to this building, details which hundreds o travellers have already published; the object of these pages is to sketch manners and customs; I refer to monuments only when they have some bearing upon these, and in reference to the impression they made upon me. I cannot, however, abstain from a few brief remarks on this architectural wonder. It owes its existence to a flash of lightning, which laid in ashes a church that Peter the Great had built upon the very spot now adorned by the holy synod. To replace the loss, Catherine II. laid, at a short distance from the burned building, the foundation-stone of the Isaac's Church. The first plans for it were drawn out by the Italian architect Rinladi: the mere foundation and preparatory labors consumed an immense time and many millions. After Catherine's death, the Emperor Paul hit upon an ingenious idea. That it might be the sooner and more cheaply finished, he proposed to complete it with bricks. Rapidly now did the building proceed; but not nearly so rapidly as it was pulled down to the very foundation when, on the eve of its completion, the deficiencies and want of harmony of the structure

were at last discerned. A committee was then formed for the express purpose of managing the matter, and consumed several years in deliberation, without coming to any agreement as to the mode in which the building should be carried out. At last, in 1819, the Emperor Alexander sent for Montferrand, the architect; who, to my own knowledge, was still busily engaged upon the building in the year 1845. True it is that the Emperor Nicholas pressed hard for all possible acceleration of the work; but even his energy and influence failed to bring to a conclusion this fat architectural job; which was, doubtless, too lucrative to those engaged in it not to be by them protracted to the utmost.

CHAPTER V.

THE WINTER PALACE.

FROM the sacred to the profane is but a step; let us take it, and we find ourselves in the Winter Palace, which, in its own particular style, is not a bit less magnificent than the imposing cathedral. An English author has declared his opinion that the trouble of a journey to St. Petersburg is well repaid by the sight of this palace, with which scarcely any other in Europe will bear comparison. And I cannot do otherwise than coincide in this opinion;—so long, that is to say, as the person undertaking the journey resides at no immoderate distance from the Russian capital.

This palace, of extraordinary extent, was built by Count Rastrelli for the Empress Elizabeth. In 1754 she laid the foundation stone of the colossal fabric. Eight years later, in the year of her death, it was completed.

Rising majestically upon the bank of the Neva, the building gives its name to the quay in its front, which, however, is more commonly known as the Court Quay. The principal façade of the enormous palace has fifty-three windows, is 470 feet long, 380 feet deep, and 76 feet high. It consists of three stories, is of the form of a long square, and its imposing aspect is not a little heightened

by ten superb pillars rising above the portal, and by finely formed statues, which, however, are only of plaster of Paris, whereas the balustrades are of beautiful marble.

Surprising is the spectacle that presents itself on entering from the side of the Neva this residence of the Czars. Here is the great entrance, including a marble staircase, whose like might in vain be sought. It leads to the first story, devoted entirely to court ceremonies. Here saloon succeeds saloon, each vaster and more magnificent than its predecessor. I will confine myself to naming the Golden Saloon (the Empress's reception-room), the White Saloon, reached through a gallery containing a series of excellent portraits of the imperial marshals, from Roumiantzoff to Paskewitsch, and connected with the Throne Saloon, or St. George's Hall, which for grandeur and beauty surpasses everything that Europe's palaces can show.

Whoever has enjoyed an opportunity of seeing these apartments lighted up, and of witnessing one of the sumptuous festivals occasionally held in them, will assuredly acquit me of exaggeration when I say that the sight carried me back to the fairy-tale days of my boyhood, and that I fancied myself transported into one of the enchanted scenes of the Thousand and One Nights.

I have already given a detailed account of the Perterhof festival; how it ends with a ball, to which all the world, without distinction of persons or ranks, finds admission. In like manner, on every New Year's day, a popular ball takes place in the Winter Palace, and is graced by the presence of the whole court. The Emperor and Empress mingle freely with the motley and heaving throng, and are lost in the vast assemblage. Only with difficulty do they make their way to the dance through the densely crowded saloons. Had Nicholas anything to fear from his subjects, here were the place where he would be in real danger, for so great is the crush around him that it was only by the utmost efforts I avoided being squeezed bodily against him. In such a moment of close proximity I gazed hard at the Emperor, seeking to read upon his countenance the dominant emotions of his mind. None others could I trace than the perfect tranquillity and cheerful contentment of a father of a family, when surrounded by his children, in full enjoyment of a

festival of his preparation. And heartily have I since laughed—less, however, at the absurd story than at the utter ignorance it showed of the real feelings of the Russian people—when reading in certain German papers how, on the occasion of the Silver Wedding * of the illustrious pair, the Emperor was just about to seat himself upon the throne at the Peterhof ball, when Prince Wolkonsky fortunately pulled him back, only just in time, for the very next moment hundreds of dagger blades, moved by hidden mechanism, would have been propelled from the seat, back, and arms of the chair, and have sheathed themselves in the body of Nicholas. It so happened that I was present at that joyous feast at Peterhof. There was no throne in the room at all, and the daggers existed only in the diseased imaginations of the inventors of the tale.

If the interior of the Winter Palace combines all that it be possible to conceive of magnificence, taste, luxury, and splendour, it yet is perhaps surpassed by the view from the windows on three of its sides.

The principal front faces the south, and commands a view over the Kaiser-Platz, or Emperor's Square, in whose centre rises the glorious Alexander Column. This colossal memorial reminds one of the most stupendous monuments of antiquity; probably it is hitherto unsurpassed; at any rate, it is a higher pillar than either Pompey's or Trajan's. It consists of a single granite block, and weighs 17,640 cwt. The pedestal, in due proportion to the height and circumference of the column, is also a solid block of granite, and both were hewn out of the quarries of Pytterlaxe, a village on the Gulf of Finland, one and twenty German miles from St. Petersburg. On the apex of the column hovers an angel of extraordinary beauty, with head depressed, the cross in one hand, and the other pointing to heaven. Pity it is that on two sides, when you contemplate this lovely statue from a distance, the head can hardly be seen at all; only on a near approach does the beholder discern all the beauty and perfection of the work. The story goes that Louis Philippe of France, in the days of his greatest power and prosperity,

* "Silver Wedding.—The twenty-fifth anniversary of marriage, celebrated by rejoicings and entertainments.—T.

applied to the Emperor Nicholas for a similar column out of his Finland quarries. The Emperor begged to be excused. "He would not," he said, "send him a smaller one; a similar one he could not send him; and a greater was not to be obtained."

It is much to be regretted that this splendid monolith is already cracked.

Opposite to the pillar stands the fine building, with beautiful arcades, and bronze decorations, occupied by the military staff. To the west, one looks across the great parade ground to the Admiralty, the Isaac's Square, and its lofty church. The view to the north I never saw but in winter, from Prince Wolkonsky's reception-room; but never did any sight more surprise and powerfully impress me. That immeasurable field of ice, with islands sharply defined upon its level surface; Wasili-Ostrow, with its magnificent Exchange; the Academy, with its sphinxes, pillars, and statues; the citadel, the Petersburg and the Wiburg shores, with their snow-covered towers and roofs; the whole vast landscape wrapped in winter's garment; the innumerable columns of smoke rising on all sides, and telling of the dense population of the seemingly solitary plain; and then the swift sledges, darting to and fro, and suddenly disappearing like the figures in a dream;—altogether the winter landscape was the most beautiful that could well be seen.

His Excellency kept me waiting a tolerably long time for the honour of an interview; but truly I could have waited much longer without finding the time hang heavy. I have never been a haunter of the ante-chambers of the great; but if all commanded so agreeable a view, I should cease to wonder that such dancing of attendance is so much in vogue.

From the eastern side of the palace, only the Hermitage is to be seen, to which a close, covered gallery leads.

The crown and sceptre, and other state jewels, are kept in the Winter Palace.

If this imperial residence combines all that can be imagined of brilliancy, splendour, wealth, taste, and elegance, on the other hand, the conveniences it affords to its inmates, except in the case of the very highest personages, are extremely limited. The whole first story of the immense pile is unoccupied,—consisting en-

tirely of the vast apartments reserved for court festivals and ceremonies. The basement floor contains the kitchen and the lodgings of the innumerable servants. The entresol is for the higher officials. The second floor is inhabited by the imperial family, including the ladies of the court and great officers of the palace. Altogether, the roof covers more than twelve hundred persons. As far as height goes, there is plenty of room, but the breadth is scanty enough. And what makes it scantier still is that, in the centre of the second floor, one steps out of one of the apartments into a tolerably spacious garden! This is certainly an agreeable surprise. Pleasant is it, whilst a northern winter frowns around, to wander in an artificial climate, and in the shadow of tropical plants. But the luxury infringes terribly on the area of the house; so that even the minister Wolkonsky possesses, besides a very handsome reception-room, only a few very small chambers. It is a usual characteristic of the Russian style of building—a characteristic which pointedly indicates the national quality of vanity,—that in all houses, even in those occupied by the inferior classes of citizens, the principal, most agreeable, and important apartment is appropriated to the purposes of a drawing-room. So long as this is spacious and handsome, the Russian attaches little importance to the degree of comfort, or to the habitable condition, of the inferior apartments in which he passes his life. Thus does Prince Wolkonsky content himself, the whole year through, with his narrow little rooms, in which he also receives all visitors, except on grand reception-days; although he has, at no greater distance than the thickness of a wall, a splendid saloon, adorned with a piece of Gobelin tapestry of marvellous magnificence, a present from Charles X. Six or eight times in the year, this saloon is thrown open to a distinguished company; that is all the use made of it.

Through the covered gallery of the Winter Palace already mentioned, we reach the "*Sans-Souci*" of the great Catherine, the Hermitage, of her own building; on entering which the Empress was wont to lay aside crown and sceptre, and appear as the witty and charming woman. Here, in her boudoir, she enjoyed her leisure, surrounded by a circle of men and women of sympathetic tastes and accomplishments. Here she held her *soirées spirituelles*,

conversazioni, and reading parties; here was her studio and workshop, where she drew, engraved, and exercised the turner's craft. I will not weary the reader with a description of the gallery of two thousand pictures, including many master-pieces of almost every school down to our own day, nor with a detail of the collections of medals and engravings; and I will but briefly mention the library, which contains upwards of a hundred thousand volumes; amongst them many unpublished manuscripts, and especially a copy of Voltaire's works, proceeding from his own library, and enriched with marginal notes in his own writing—many of them exceedingly witty, and which have not found their way into any subsequent editions of his writings. Here also are preserved a quantity of turnery-ware, very skilfully wrought by Catherine's own hand. These mechanical occupations seem to have been her favourite pastime. She turned a great deal, and engraved on cornelian, and frequently made presents of these imperial productions to courtiers and learned men. King Stanislaus of Poland speaks in his memoirs with enthusiasm of the zeal with which the great woman pursued these trifling occupations, and mentions, amongst other things, a capital copy of a picture by Greuze, executed with such talent and artistic skill that it possessed every quality and perfection of the original.

The Hermitage has had repeated additions made to it, and at the present time they are busy enlarging it. The present Emperor's well-known love of art is a guarantee that its contents also will be increased. He has already enriched it by various contributions, and especially by the addition of many admirable pictures to the gallery.

Such was the aspect of the Winter Palace in December, 1837 On a certain evening of that month, the court was witnessing a performance of the French company at the Michael's Theatre, when an aid-de-camp entered the imperial box and whispered to Prince Wolkonsky, one of the ministers there present. The prince gave him orders, and continued to look quietly on at the performance. Half-an-hour later the aid-de-camp returned, and this time the Prince, after listening to him, spoke to the Emperor, who rose, gave his arm to his wife, and conducted her to her carriage. The coachman received orders to drive to the Anitchkoff Palace instead of to the

Winter Palace. The Emperor mounted a horse that was in waiting for him, and galloped to the Winter Palace. There was a terrible crowd and crushing in the streets; half St. Petersburg was on foot; it was as light as day, and flames roared up into the sky: the Winter Palace was on fire.

A terrible sight awaited the Emperor. The cradle of his childhood stood in a sea of fire. From every window of the façade the flames flared furiously upwards; from that side nothing could be distinguished of the whole upper portion of the building; but high, high in the air glimpses were occasionally caught of gigantic figures towering above the flames and rocking on their lofty pinnacles. These were the allegorical figures which decorated the summit of the roof, and which the flames actually spared; blackened, but otherwise uninjured, they passed through that terrible conflagration.

The Emperor galloped round the building to look after his sentries. The precaution was not superfluous; on the western side two soldiers were near falling victims to the fire; in the general confusion those whose duty it was had forgotten to relieve them, and there they stood, notwithstanding the frightful heat, musket on shoulder and resigned to their fate. The Emperor relieved them himself, and pressed forward into the palace; at a glance he saw that the whole must soon fall in, and he hastened into the rooms where the danger seemed greatest, to call out the men who were saving the furniture. At his command everybody fled from the building, with the exception of four workmen who had received orders to save an enormous mirror, and who would not leave the palace without it. The Emperor drew his sword, and with one blow of the hilt shivered the glass. Scarcely had the last man passed the threshold, when the roof fell in with a terrible crash. Having satisfied himself that no more lives were in danger, Nicholas hurried to the Empress at the Anitchkoff Palace.

The Empress had recovered from her first alarm. She was tired, and when she had seen her husband, she asked, with some uneasiness, where she was to pass the night. Her secretary, the privy-councillor Chambeau, begged permission to conduct her to the sleeping-room that had been hastily prepared for her. There she found,

to her great astonishment, through the delicate attention of an attached servant—her sleeping apartment out of the Winter Palace, with its thousand little comforts and conveniences; everything in the same place and order as if it had remained untouched since she last dressed herself. When the fire had reached that wing of the palace (and it spread with tremendous rapidity), Chambeau hastened to the boudoir with a dozen servants and muschiks. "All here belongs to the Empress?" he cried, "not a thing must be broken!" and in aprons, baskets, pockets, were carried away all those thousand-and-one costly nicknacks—clocks, vases, boxes, and ornaments —without which such a boudoir could not be complete. Without the slightest injury they were carried out of the burning palace and for half-a-league through the heaving throng that filled the streets; and when Chambeau had arranged everything as it was in its former place, the locality alone was changed; all things seemed to stand where they had been left—not a riband was crumpled nor a sheet of paper soiled. I doubt there being many masters in Germany who are so well and so quickly served.

The next day the Emperor returned to the scene of destruction. Within the walls the fire still raged. It had been allowed to burn on, whilst all efforts were directed to saving the Hermitage, fortunately with complete success.

Long gazed Nicholas in deep sorrow at the grave of one of the prime ornaments of his beautiful city. At last he raised his head, passed his hand over his brow, and said, quite cheerfully, "This day year will I again sleep in my room in the Winter Palace. Who undertakes the building?"

All present recoiled from the challenge. There stood around the Emperor many competent judges in such matters, but not one had the courage to undertake that which seemed impossible. There was a brief pause, and then General Kleinmichael, an aide-de-camp of the Emperor's, stepped forward and said, like the Duke of Alba to Don Philip, "I will."

"And the building is to be complete in a year?" asked the Emperor.

"Yes, Sire."

"'Tis good! Set to work!"

An hour later the still burning ruins were being cleared away. The destruction of the building had occurred in December, 1837; by December, 1838, it was rebuilt. Three months later it was occupied by the court.

Kleinmichael had kept his word; the building was completed, completed in the time specified! but—at what a price!! Only in Russia was such a wonderful work possible; only in Russia, where the will of the "Master" is a decree of Providence; only in Russia, where they spare nothing, recoil from nothing, to fulfil his commands.

Under the Empress Elizabeth the palace had taken eight years to build; Kleinmichael completed it in one. True it is that almost the whole of the masonry resisted the fire, but the whole of the interior had to be reconstructed; and what a task that was! The work went on literally day and night; there was no pause for meals; the gangs of workmen relieved each other. Festivals were unheeded; the seasons themselves were overcome. To accelerate the work, the building was kept, the winter through, artificially heated to the excessive temperature of twenty-four to twenty-six degrees Reaumur. Many workmen sank under the heat, and were carried out dead or dying; a painter, who was decorating a ceiling, fell from his ladder struck with apoplexy. Neither money, health, nor life was spared. The Emperor, who, at the time of the conflagration, had risked his own life by penetrating into the innermost apartments to save the lives of others, knew nothing of the means employed to carry out his will. In the December of the following year, and in a proud consciousness of his power, he entered the resuscitated palace and rejoiced over his work. The whole was constructed on the previous plan, but with some improvements and many embellishments. With the Empress on his arm, and followed by his whole family, he traversed the apartments of this immense building, completed in one year's time, by the labour of thousands of men. He reached the saloon of St. George, the largest and most beautiful of all, and the royal family remained there longer than anywhere else, examining the costly gold mouldings of the ceiling, the five colossal bronze chandeliers, and the beautiful relievo over the throne, which represents St. George slaying the dragon. The

Empress was tired, and would have sat down;—*the patron spirit of Russia prevented her:* as yet there was no furniture in the hall, so she leaned upon the Emperor's arm and walked into the next room, followed by the entire retinue. The last of these had scarcely passed through the door, when a thundering crash resounded through the palace, which trembled to its very foundations, and the air was darkened by clouds of dust. The timbers of the ceiling of the saloon of St. George had yielded to the weight of the chandeliers, and the whole had fallen in, crushing every thing beneath its enormous mass. The saloon, a moment before so brilliant, was a heap of ruins. The splendid palace was again partly destroyed, but the genius of Russia had watched over her destiny—the imperial family was saved.

CHAPTER VI.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

AMONGST the numerous and magnificent public buildings which constitute so striking a feature of the Russian capital, there is one class, to which I have not yet referred, which must not be forgotten. Besides the imperial palaces, the churches, the buildings appropriated to the use of the admiralty, the military staff, and the senates; besides the theatres, barracks, and so forth, the educational establishments deserve special mention. Their annual cost to the State amounts to a sum such as Russia only could afford for such a purpose. The immense expense can be understood only by calling to mind that Louis XIV's saying, "*L'Etat c'est moi!*" is also that of the Emperor, who takes as much care of the State as he could do of his own person. Besides the various civil and military schools, those of the Mining and Forest Corps are excellent educational institutions for youth. These two remarkable and palace-like buildings are provided with everything that can contribute to the health and comfort of their inmates; and the treatment of the scholars completely fulfils the high expectations which the imposing exterior of the edifice is calculated to awaken. There is no great

difficulty in obtaining the admission of lads. The interest of the State is the main object kept in view; and the State, it is considered, cannot have too many able servants. From the day of his entrance into these corps, every material and moral want of the pupil is fully supplied, not only until his education is completed, but in some sort for his whole life. By the fact of his entrance into one of these schools, he becomes bound to serve the State a certain number of years. This includes a reciprocal obligation on the part of government to provide the young man, when his term of service is expired, with a suitable position. The system of education in these corps is, as in the Polytechnic School at Paris, entirely military. It is usual in Russia for every government servant to hold military rank. From this arrangement springs an official aristocracy, which, in social estimation and value, is far superior to the aristocracy of birth. The official aristocracy occupy an important middle station between the nobles by birth and the burgher classes. In addition to the imperial educational establishments already existing, the Duke of Oldenburgh founded, some twelve or fourteen years ago,* a school of law, which, under his auspices, has had the happiest results. It has sent forth a large number of legal officials, who enjoy, especially by reason of their incorruptibility, the high respect of the nation. There can be no higher recommendation of such an official, nor one tending to inspire greater confidence in him, than to have been educated at the Oldenburgh legal school. Stimulated by the success of this undertaking, in the year 1840 the noble duke founded, at Kalomeja, nine versts from St. Petersburg, a school of agriculture, which has also been signally successful. The young men who there receive theoretical and practical instruction in the various branches of farming are sent, after completing the course, to distant provinces of the empire. There, installed as teachers of government officers, they exercise an advantageous influence on the progress of agriculture. Of such institutions there are several in the country; but that which advantageously distinguishes those of the Duke of Oldenburgh above them, is their superior moral standing,

* It may here be proper to remind the reader that, although Mr. Jerrmann's book was first published in the year 1851, some of its chapters had been written several years earlier.—T.

and the circumstance that they annually send forth a number of young officials whose incorruptibility has become proverbial; assuredly a great benefit for a country where there is by no means a superfluity of that virtue.

The public schools—called corps in Russia—are under the special protection, and indeed, it may be said, under the personal superintendence, of the Emperor. By day and by night, they are never safe from his domiciliary visits. Often does Nicholas rise in the middle of the night from the iron camp bed upon which he invariably reposes, get into his one-horse droschki, and make a solitary tour of inspection of the various public schools. Not unfrequently he goes forth on foot, and takes the first vehicle he finds plying for hire in the street. Thus it was that upon a certain snowy night an Istworstschik drove him in his sledge to a remote quarter of the city. The sledge had long to wait for him, and when the Emperor returned and, before getting in, would have paid the driver, he found that he had no money about him. The grinning Istworstschik declared that was not of the least consequence, and when the Czar, throwing himself into the sledge, absently called out "Na domo!" (*Home!*), the man drove his little Finland horse full trot to the Winter Palace, in whose immediate neighbourhood he suddenly stopped, and looked inquiringly round at his fare. The Emperor got out, rather surprised, ordered him to come to the same place on the following evening, and asked him, as he walked away: "Do you know me?" A sly "No" was the reply, and the next evening the sledge-driver received princely payment—less, assuredly, for his readiness to give credit than for his cunning discretion.

At these nocturnal visits to the schools, rigid investigations take place. The Emperor's first glance on entering the corridor is at the thermometer; and woe betide those who are responsible, if it does not stand at the prescribed fourteen degrees. Then he visits all the rooms, to see if there be everywhere light, and if the officers on duty be vigilant. The beds of the scholars are next examined; the Emperor pulls off the bed-clothes, and, holding a light in one hand, with the other he turns the children from side to side, strictly investigating the cleanliness of the linen, and of their persons.

Often, in order to try bodily strength, he challenges them to wrestle with him, and, for a stranger who should suddenly enter, it would certainly be no uninteresting sight to behold the despot of all the Russias, with five or six lads clinging to his gigantic form, and exerting their utmost strength to throw the ruler of forty millions of men upon the floor. Henry IV.'s reply to the Spanish ambassador: "You are a father? Then I can continue my game!" has helped to fill all sorts of grammars and vademecums down to the present day; of the paternal sports of the mightiest of European potentates with lads who are total strangers to him, nothing is known but the wildest and most ridiculous tales that idleness and a rage for gossip ever engendered. In the intimate family circle of the Russian court these offspring of corrupt imaginations are often the subject of jest and laughter. In proof that these absurd and nonsensical fabrications have reached the ears of Nicholas himself, he one day said to the Viscount de Custine, when showing him the pupils of the public schools, whose healthy happy appearance struck every one: "Here are some of the youths of whom I devour a few every week;" and Count Orloff, who just then came up and was presented to Custine, announced himself as "the famous poisoner."

This casual mention of Viscount de Custine reminds me of his deplorable book, which, by its three editions, and by the nonsense they contained, achieved a momentary celebrity. I will not here dwell upon the contradictions and inconsistencies, or upon the personal views and passionate prejudices with which the book abounds. I will limit myself to the simple and incontrovertible fact that M. de Custine undertook to place before the reading public a description, in two thick octavo volumes, founded upon personal observation, of the political and social condition of a country whose language and customs were totally unknown to him, which he had never before visited, and in which he sojourned for the long period of nearly three months. This was the whole time he had to get together the materials of his work; and this time was taken up with visits, balls, concerts, theatres, parades, court festivals, and with trips to Moscow, Charkow, and, if I do not mistake, also to Kasan. Had the noble viscount, who, in the first volume of his

bad book—written in St. Petersburg—fawned upon the Emperor like any lapdog, in hopes of obtaining the much desired amnesty for his Polish *protégé*, and who, when these hopes were destroyed, filled his second volume with falsehoods and impure gossip concerning the very same sovereign—had the noble viscount, I say, passed his days in the streets and squares, in the public buildings, markets, taverns, and coffee-houses; and had he, in the evening, instead of visiting brilliant *soirées*, sat down with his dwornik (an upper servant), and made him talk about the mode of life, the joys and sufferings of the Russian people, he would have learned much more that was true and worth knowing than in the *côteries* he frequented, and which took advantage of his thoroughly French love of gossip to impose upon him all sorts of ridiculous fables, such as it suited their purpose to propagate. Having once told them to the credulous viscount, their object was attained, and the inventions were sure of wide circulation. At that period it must have been a man of greater discernment and more decided character than M. de Custine not to be carried away by the stream of popular prejudice with regard to Russia, a prejudice then so strong that it led to the greatest personal injustice. This was the case not less in Germany —always imitative and eager to follow the fashion—than in France. Not long after the appearance of the work now referred to I returned to Germany from Russia, and met, on an October day, under the Linden at Berlin, a man honoured and esteemed by all who knew him, by reason of his rare talents, his learning, and his manly character,—namely, Counsellor Gretsch. I cannot describe his lamentations when he saw me. "Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "you here and I knew it not! How unfortunate! What wretched days I have passed here!" And he was eloquent in his complaints of the contemptuous, mistrustful treatment he had encountered on all sides, and which he had been compelled to endure the whole time that his business, entirely of a literary and scientific nature, had detained him in Berlin. He had brought it to a close, and was going away the next day. In reply to my entreaty that he would remain a day longer, he assured me that nothing would induce him to delay his departure a single hour more than was absolutely necessary. He only wished, he said, that he might have the

opportunity of welcoming many Berlin people at St. Petersburg, that they might form some faint idea of the way in which hospitality was understood and practised by the rude barbarians of the North.

It was during the existence of this state of popular feeling that M. de Custine's book appeared, and excited a fleeting but for the time great and general interest. The work reached the Emperor's hands, and accident threw a copy in my way in which he had made red marks against the most striking passages. Whether the malice of some of these vexed him I know not; but I think I can answer, of my own knowledge, for his having often heartily laughed at the nonsense and many absurdities the book contains.

CHAPTER VII.

FOUNDLING HOSPITAL.

THE richest and most considerable of the public institutions of St. Petersburg is the Foundling Hospital. Well endowed from its very first establishment, it owes its colossal wealth to the bounty and particular care of the late Empress Maria. Amongst other favours accorded to the hospital, she gave it the monopoly of playing-cards. The duty on these is very high; if I am not mistaken it amounts to fifty silver kopecks (more than eighteen pence) a pack. Now I do not think I make too bold an assertion, when I say that in all the other countries of Europe put together there is not so great a consumption of cards as in Russia. Not only the long winter evenings,—that is to say, the long evenings of nine months out of the twelve,—and the Russians' innate love for play, make the sale of cards something almost incredible; but luxury and waste further stimulate the demand. In the higher circles, a pack of cards serves but for one game of ombre, whist, &c.; and even in the better sort of clubs new cards are taken after every third game. In Germany such extravagance would astonish; it gives but a faint idea of the luxury prevailing in Russia, although

this is but a pale shadow of that which formerly reigned. About eight years ago the charming Countess Woronzow Daschkow took into her head to give a grand fête in the old French style. For that evening the whole house and its appurtenances were transformed, by the magic of her command, into a mansion of Louis XIV.'s time; corridors, staircases, saloons, boudoirs, all wore the character of that period; walls and ceilings, floors and windows, the furniture, the services, even the liveries of the laced footmen, with their long powdered perukes—all was rococo. The entertainment lasted four hours, cost many hundred thousand rubles, and early the next morning everything was destroyed and torn down, in order to restore the house as quickly as possible to its former condition. The houses of all persons of quality are annually thoroughly new-furnished, that they may not be a single season behind the latest Paris fashions; and yet what is all this compared to the mad prodigality of an earlier period? Previously to the accession of Alexander, a high-born Russian would have thought it a profanation of hospitality to use the same service for two feasts. The guests gone, the servants took everything that had been used at the repast—bottles, glasses, covers, plates, candlesticks, linen—the whole furniture of the table, in short—and tossed it all out upon the heads of the rejoicing mob assembled in the street below. What would now be deemed madness, was then good taste. May posterity pass a milder judgment on *our* fashionable follies and extravagances!

The enormous capital belonging to the St. Petersburg Foundling Hospital, affords it abundant means to maintain itself on a level in every respect with the first philanthropic institutions in the world. The institution is under the immediate protection of the present empress, who frequently visits it, often in company with the Duchess of Leuchtenberg, watches over all its arrangements with true womanly care, and strengthens and improves it by her powerful patronage. The orphan who enters this charitable house is cared for not only in its tender infancy, but for its whole life. Unseeing and unseen, the woman on duty in the interior of the chamber receives the little helpless being whom the world and its own parents abandon. At the ring of the door-bell she turns the exterior half of the coffer inwards, her ear scarcely catching the last

murmured blessing with which many a heartbroken mother commits to the care of strangers that which she holds dearest in the world. As soon as received, the infant undergoes a medical examination; and an exact record is made of every mark and sign upon its body and linen,—of everything, in short, which came with it. Then it is washed, dressed in new clothes, a number is allotted to it, and it is given over to one of the nurses, who are always there in readiness. It is an affecting sight, on bright spring mornings, to see long strings of well-closed carriages driving slowly through the streets, conveying the nurses and their innocent charges into the country. There the children remain for some years, under the care and superintendence of physicians and officers of the institution, who regularly and strictly inspect the foster mothers. The first years of infancy happily passed, the children are brought back to the Foundling Hospital, and their education begins. The nature of this education depends entirely on the capacity and inclinations they betray. This establishment sends forth stout blacksmiths, and ploughmen, just as it has also produced distinguished officers, sculptors, and musicians. Cooks from the Foundling Hospital are much sought after; governesses that have been educated there are preferred to all others. When the lad has completed his education in the house which received him as a helpless infant, the choice of a calling is allowed him,—more or less limited, of course, by the degree of ability and conduct he has manifested. He may devote himself to science or art, to the military or naval profession, to some trade or handicraft—just as he pleases; and the expense of his education, previously borne by the hospital, thenceforward falls upon the government. To requite this he is bound to devote his acquirements to the service of the state for a certain time. This, however, is not a very hard condition, since it ultimately leads to that which so many thousands sigh after for years in vain, namely, an appointment as soon as he is quite fit for one. Formerly these foundlings could be at any time claimed by their parents; but lately a ukase has put many difficulties in the way of such claims, if it has not, indeed, totally disallowed them. This decree was rendered necessary by the great abuses that arose from the facilities afforded to heartless and unscrupulous parents of getting rid of the care of their

offspring's childhood without urgent necessity. In this manner, children born in wedlock were often temporarily committed to the care of the state, and taken back when their age and education rendered them profitable, instead of burdensome, to their families.

Startling contrasts abound in St. Petersburg. One morning, before four o'clock, I was driving to the Neva baths, when, on the Camino-Most, the stone bridge, my progress was impeded by a long procession of these little emigrants, proceeding into the country in their carriages. Still under the influence of the impression this scene had made upon me, and meditating on the temptations and perils to which the children, and especially the daughters, of the poor are exposed in this age of luxury and corruption, I drove past the magnificent Kasansky, and reached the Newsky Prospect, stretching away, in its vast length, beyond my range of vision, and at that hour of the morning, hushed in a stillness which was not without a certain solemnity. Suddenly, to my astonished eyes, the strangest scene presented itself. I beheld before me an *al-fresco* ball. A number of elegantly attired ladies, some in handsome shawls, and with feathers in their hats, were performing the strangest sort of dance, which they accompanied with a sort of bowing motion, incessantly repeated. I could recognise no French or German dance in their singular evolutions. Could it be some Russian national dance? I thought. What kind of dance could it be that was thus danced in broad daylight on the public highway, and without male dancers? A few men were certainly there, but merely as lookers on. I touched the arm of my Istworstschik, called his attention to the group, and made an interrogative gesture. The explanation he gave me was doubtless very lucid and circumstantial, and would have been highly satisfactory, had it only been intelligible to me. Unable to understand a word he said, I ordered him, by the vigorous articulation of "Pachol," to drive up to the strange ball before the weary dancers could seek repose upon the stones at the street corners. Drawing nearer and nearer, I yet heard no sound of music; at last we reached the Anitschkow Palace, and found ourselves close to the scene of this untimely activity. A repulsive and horrible sight met my eyes. A number of young women, apparently still fresh and blooming, with ruddy cheeks,—but whether of artificial

or natural colours their incessant monotonous bowing movement prevented my distinguishing—elegantly dressed in silks, jewels, and feathers, were sweeping the Newsky Street under the superintendence of policemen. Some of them appeared overwhelmed with shame, others stared at me, at the Istworstschik and horse, with perfect indifference, and seemed rejoiced at our passage, which suspended for a moment their painful and disgraceful occupation. They were a detachment of nocturnal wanderers, who, when returning too tardily to their homes from pursuing their wretched calling, had fallen into the hands of the patrol, had passed the remainder of the night in the watch house, and were now atoning, broom in hand, their untimely rambles. I hurried off to the bath, glad to escape from this degrading and deplorable spectacle.

CHAPTER VIII.

CURIOSA.

EAGER to admire a building which enjoys no small fame in Germany, I hastened to the celebrated Marble Palace. One who, expecting to enter an orangery, falls into an ice-cellar, cannot experience a more bitter deception, or a severer chill, than I did. This famous palace is the most repulsive building in all St. Petersburg. Cold and gloomy in its aspect, at the mere sight of it the beholder experiences an icy shivering. Catherine II. built it for Orloff, after whose death it was purchased by the Crown, and was occupied for a time by the deceased Grand-duke Constantine. It is now empty. Besides the sentries, no one approaches it: the Petersburgers hold it in special antipathy.

The only remarkable point about the palace is the enormous sum it cost. A handsome building it decidedly is not. Its shape is a long quadrangle, whose two longest sides face south and north. The chief façade, towards the north, looks disproportionately small when compared with the whole building. Two wings are adorned with handsome pillars, but they are of unequal height, which makes an

unpleasant impression on the beholder. The ground floor of the palace is of granite, whilst its two upper stories are of grey-veined marble, embellished with pilasters and pillars of red marble, whose capitals, by way of farther variety, are of white marble. The first floor is ornamented with balconies and balustrades of gilt bronze; the panes of glass in the windows are three feet high, and of wonderful purity.

Far superior in beauty is the Tauris Palace. It belonged to Potemkin. After his death Catherine II. bought it, and bestowed upon it, in commemoration of her favourite's campaign in the Crimea, the name that it still bears. The greatest ornament of this palace is its magnificent winter-garden, which, in extent and beauty, far surpasses that of the Winter Palace. The grandeur of the whole building defies description. After Catherine's death, Paul converted a part of it into a barrack, and the great hall immediately adjoining the garden was turned into a reading-room for the officers of the guard. In this hall were the tables laid out for the celebrated banquet given by Potemkin to the Empress. So vast are its dimensions, that, according to the memoirs of King Stanislaus, a whole battalion of soldiers was once manœuvred in it. The Emperor Alexander had it put in repair, and the original old furniture replaced in it.

I must not leave entirely unnoticed a palace which stands on the south side of the Summer Garden, and is known by the name of the Red Palace,—a name for which it is indebted to one of the many strange whims of the Emperor Paul. At a court ball, a lady made her appearance in red gloves, which so enchanted Paul, that the next day he proclaimed red his favourite colour, and ordered that the palace should forthwith receive that showy tint. In the same palace, his monogram, P.I., is so constantly repeated on every side, and in every corner, that an Englishman, who undertook the thankless task of counting them, got as far as 8000, and then, through weariness, left off without having nearly completed his undertaking. Paul had many such crotchets. So fond was he of the gaudy and the motley, that one of his ukases was to the effect that, on one and the same day, all the gates, bridges, palaces, guard-houses, &c. in the whole vast empire should be painted in variegated

colours;—a piece of childish folly, the results of which were, in time, of course, obliterated.

More interesting to me than all these palaces, whose attractions are for the most part limited to the splendour, taste, and luxury which are their general characteristics, was the modest little house on the St. Petersburg side of the Neva, which Russian veneration for a great sovereign has covered with a wooden casket to protect it from decay. It is the same little house in which the greatest Russian who ever lived used to rest after his hard day's work; the house whence he directed the building of the great capital, whose foundation-stone he laid. With religious scrupulousness his rooms are preserved in precisely the same order as when he occupied them. There stands his bedstead; there are his tools, his architect's rule, his inkstand, and some old fragments of his clothing. Everything he touched, all that belonged to him, is held sacred by his descendants; and even a foreigner cannot but feel a pious emotion at the sight of these relics—mementos of the thoughts, deeds, and mode of life of the greatest man of his time. The respect and piety of those who have come after him, their grateful memory of his labours for the happiness of his people, and of the benefits he conferred on his country, have found expression in the conversion of his sleeping-room into a chapel. At an altar, whose plainness accords with the simplicity of the apartment, two masses are daily said. In the neighbourhood an old inn is shown to strangers, built upon the same spot were formerly stood the little tavern at which Peter made an appointment, when his "day's work" was over, with the Dutch ambassador, who was trying to persuade him into a commercial treaty disadvantageous to Russia. There, with Menzikoff to back him, the Czar drank so stoutly and repeatedly to his guest, that the Hollander got drunk in replying to the challenge, and at last fell under the table, where he was left by his two entertainers until the cool morning air should restore his senses.

Upon the island nearest to the St. Petersburg side of the river stands the citadel, there always spoken of as the "fortress." It is almost entirely of granite, and was built by Peter the Great after a plan of his own drawing. In the interior of the church pertaining to it, in the imperial vaults, are preserved the banners and keys of

conquered towns, those of Warsaw, Oczakoff, Ismael, and Derbent occupying the first places; and there are also kept the bread and salt which the chief magistrate of Warsaw presented, with the city keys, to Suwarrow, in token of the complete subjection of Poland. The tower of the church is lofty and covered with gold, like almost all the church towers of St. Petersburg.

In a casemate of the fortress, converted into a state prison, Prince Alexis, son of Peter I., ended his days, after his condemnation as a rebel. And there, in 1771, perished the princess Tarakanoff, and all the other state prisoners there confined, in consequence of an overflow of the Neva. Since those days the state of morals in Russia has greatly improved, even amongst the very lowest classes, and manners and habits have become milder and more humane. In the year 1776, out of 4369 deaths in St. Petersburg, 133 persons were *found dead*—murdered, there could be no doubt. What a difference between then and now! Modern writers certainly warn us of the insecurity of the streets in the long winter evenings; even Kohl, who wrote only eleven years ago about St. Petersburg, sees a candidate for the cemetery in every sledge that crosses the Neva after nightfall; but such expressions are the mere results of preconceived notions or exaggerated apprehensions. It has happened to me to return home from Wassilije-Ostrow at every hour of the night, and in every season of the year, and I never found cause for the least uneasiness.

From time to time a robbery or murderous assault certainly occurs, from time to time a corpse is found upon or under the ice; but amongst ourselves, in our own Prussian capital, robberies and even murders are sometimes committed, without Berlin being set down on that account as an "uncivilised" or "unsafe" city.

Moreover one must not overlook the fact, that many dead bodies, found in the street, on hard winter nights, are quite erroneously supposed to have been left there by murderers. How often has it happened to myself, driving through St. Petersburg in bright summer nights, to pass the bodies of men lying in the middle of the street in a perfectly unconscious condition! They had been neither knocked down nor wounded, but were simply dead drunk. On a December night a tipsy nap of this kind inevitably entails

death. And frozen to death many undoubtedly are. At Cronstadt, every year, sentries perish in that manner, although, when the cold is severe, they wear thick furs and are relieved every half hour. Occasionally, too, they are attacked by wolves, which is perhaps what has given occasion to Mr. Kohl to describe Russian country houses in a manner which might lead one to suppose that, in every villa round St. Petersburg, the bears and wolves run about as plentifully as puppies and poodles in German country places. All this belongs to the class of exceptions—nay, so great is the scarcity of wolves at St. Petersburg, that when the court on one occasion, to pleasure a foreign prince, got up a wolf-hunt, the witty prince, when the chase was ended, expressed great surprise at the singular breed of the slain savage, round whose neck the hair was rubbed off, *exactly as if he had worn a collar*. If, in Russia, the poor are more exposed than the rich to death from frost, this is only an indirect consequence of the cold—a more direct one of their love of brandy. If the *wodka* has not been previously indulged in, there is little cause for apprehension in the streets and immediate vicinity of St. Petersburg—especially as even the very poorest has there at least a sheep-skin wherein to wrap himself. A good raccoon-skin (Schuppenpelz-Waschbär) will resist a cold of twenty or more degrees in the open country.

These raccoon furs form the customary winter clothing of the Petersburgers. Foreigners, on their road to Russia, are often advised to provide themselves with such furs at Hamburgh or Leipzig, because they are infinitely cheaper in Germany. That they *are* cheaper is true enough, and he who buys one in Germany, with a view to selling it to a furrier at St. Petersburg, may find his account in the purchase. Not so he who buys it for his own wear, for in that case he is obliged to have it dressed over again in Russia, which is expensive and troublesome. In Germany they dress these skins so badly that in Russia they are scarcely wearable. I travelled to St. Petersburg with an acquaintance who had bought one of these raccoon-fur coats at Hamburg for eighty dollars, Prussian currency. It was bad and heavy, and in two months it became hard. Its owner wore it for three years, with great discomfort, then left the country, and was fain to give it away, because he would not be

troubled to drag it about with him in summer, and nobody would buy it. Thus, in three years, his furs cost him eighty dollars. On reaching St. Petersburg, I purchased, from Michael, the German currier on the Newsky, a fur coat for 1000 rubles, or about 300 dollars, Prussian currency, wore it three winters, then went away, and returned it to the seller, who, the fur having been taken good care of, willingly took it back and returned me my money, deducting only fifteen Prussian dollars for the use of the garment. So that, for three years, and for fifteen dollars, I had had the wear of a fur which was light, ample, soft, and moreover remarkably handsome.

A sort of fur that is much prized in Russia, but not very universally worn, perhaps on account of its great costliness, is called *barranken*, and is composed of the skins of unborn lambs. The mother has to be killed shortly before lambing time, to obtain the lamb, whose wool should then be silky, and have a silvery lustre. Thus it often happens that a great many ewes are sacrificed before enough lamb skins are got together (of sufficiently fine quality) to make a fur coat. This explains the high price. These skins come from Persia, Bucharest, and the land of the Calmuck. Formerly they were believed to be a vegetable product—the *Scythian sheep*, as it was called, concerning which so many fables were current. The Tartars, who deal in these skins, still vouch for the story, and demand enormous prices on account of the scarcity of their growth. The legend of this *plant* is current all over Russia. Its origin may be traced to Bell Von Antermony, who discovered, in the steppes of Astrakan, certain dry shrubs, with stems eighteen inches high, surmounted by a cluster of sharp thorny leaves, *in whose shade neither plants nor grass would grow.* Hereupon was founded the legend of an animal-plant, with seeds like those of a melon, and with fruit in the likeness of a lamb, growing upon a stem five spans from the ground. The taste of this lamb's flesh was like that of a crab. It was fixed firmly to the stem at the navel or middle of the belly; it had head, eyes, and all the other parts of a lamb, and lived until the root had *consumed all the surrounding grass and plants*, when it dried up for want of nourishment. Wolves and other beasts of prey sought it as a great delicacy. From its skin were made costly turbans, caps, muffs, &c.

That such fabulous legends as these should obtain popular currency is not surprising, but it is worthy of remark that they have been adopted by science, and credited by its votaries. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Herberstein heard of the existence of this plant, and collected the above particulars concerning it. A similar account is to be found in the works of the most celebrated writers who succeeded him, and was still credited as recently as the middle of the eighteenth century. He himself was informed by a learned Russian, the ambassador Demetrius at Venice, that his father had obtained, in Astrakan, the seeds which produced this extraordinary plant. He also affirmed to have heard, from a learned Oriental and interpreter, that in Samarcand and its neighbourhood grew plants bearing delicate fleeces, which were worn and much prized as furs.

All writers of travels in Russia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relate these fables; even botanists, like Reutenfels, Struys, and others. Kämpfer and Bruce first discovered, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, that the *baranken* are the skins of unborn lambs, and were not a little surprised to find, at that date, the belief in the "Lamb Plant" general throughout Russia, a belief which even at the present day is not quite extinct in many parts of the empire. The pretended plant was called Baranez (a lamb), whence the name of the fur, baranken.

A similar legend is current in Russia respecting the great fish *morff* or *mors*. The naturalist Mihow first related that this fish was wont to leave the Northern Ocean and ascend the mountains in the neighbourhood of the Arctic, working his way up by digging his great teeth into the earth. When he reached the top of the mountains, he rolled down the other side. Of the teeth of this pretended fish were made knife and dagger hafts, sword hilts, &c., which were sold at very high prices to the Turks and Tartars. The belief in this fable was supported in Russia by writers till the middle of the seventeenth century. Negebauer describes the sea-monster *mors* in such a manner, that, notwithstanding the walk up the mountains, there is no difficulty in recognising the sea-horse of the Icy Ocean.

CHAPTER IX.

KITCHEN AND CELLAR.

VIENNA is celebrated for its epicurism, but in this respect it is far behind St. Petersburg. In the Russian capital people eat much and live well, and, owing to the cheapness of provisions, good living is become a habit. Nothing that the country produces is dear; and what does not that country produce? From potatoes up to the finest grapes, all the products of Southern Germany are, with few exceptions, to be had. Amongst the exceptions are cherries and plums, which do not grow in northern Russia, and will not bear carriage from the southern provinces of the empire. They are to be found in hothouses, and there exceed in size and beauty any that I ever saw in Germany. But one must content one's self with their handsome appearance; they are for show, not for use. In Countess Samailow's hothouses near Pawlowsky, three versts from Sarskoje-Sélo, I saw whiteheart cherries of such wonderful size and beauty, that I thought I never before had seen fruit deserving of the name. I gathered a few; they were perfectly soft and ripe; but their flavour!—truly appearances were in their case deceitful. They were a watery fruit, without flavour or perfume; mere counterfeit cherries. On the other hand, they have beautiful melons at St. Petersburg—in Hungary I never saw them larger and finer; pomegranates of extraordinary beauty, and Crimean grapes, resembling the Cape grapes in form and size, but with some difference in flavour, the Black Sea grapes having a harshness, which doubtless proceeds from their being gathered too early. In order that they may travel without being crushed by their own weight, they are taken from the vine before they are ripe. This is certainly also the case with the grapes from the Cape; but these have so much natural heat in them, that they ripen in the sawdust in which they are packed, whereas the Crimean grapes cannot do without the sun's rays, and never attain a proper ripeness, but get only soft by keeping. As regards oranges—and these of excellent quality—they are so abundant in St. Petersburg, that they are actually squandered.

The purchaser of a whole case, taking his chance of some being spoiled, gets one—of the size usual in Germany—for six bank rubles, or about four shillings and sixpence. By retail, you pay, in the orange season, sixty to ninety kopecks for ten, or about a half-penny a-piece. Their cheapness and profusion are, however, surpassed by those of fish and game. Of deer and roebuck there are none, but wild boars and hares are in extraordinary abundance, and one is literally crammed with partridges, heathcccks, capercailzies, and birds of every kind.

The imperial kitchen is good, very delicate, but extraordinarily *meagre;* for eating goes on so constantly that it is necessary the diet should be easy of digestion, and especially not fat or rich. I had my dinner at Petershof from the imperial table, and frequently dined with one of the officers of the court, whose meals were supplied from the "second station;" the dessert was always magnificent, but as to the dinner, I confess that the style of cooking at St. George's, a celebrated Petersburg restaurateur, pleased me far better.

I must explain what I mean by "Stations." Their establishment had its origin in the following incident. The Empress once took it into her head to examine the state of her housekeeping, and found the expense of the palace *ménage* rather considerable. Ordering the daily reports of expenditure to be brought to her, she proceeded to examine them, and noticed, in the very first she took up, the following rather singular item:—"A bottle of rum for the Naslednik" (heir to the crown). This struck her as strange, and excited her curiosity to look further back; but what was her astonishment when, for years past, she found a bottle of rum set down every day to the account of the Naslednik! A bottle of rum daily! Shocked to find her son such a confirmed drinker, she continued her investigations, and found that, even in his infancy, he had made the same enormous consumption of spirits—that in his cradle, and on the very day of his birth, he was still charged with the daily bottle. And on referring back to before his birth, the bottle was still put down. This was inexplicable. Continuing her researches, however, the Empress at last got to the first bottle. It was set down in some year of the last century, and the following note was on the margin:—"On account of violent toothache, a teaspoonful

with sugar to be given; by order of the physician of the imperial court." So, because the Emperor Alexander, when heir-apparent, had taken a teaspoonful of rum for a toothache, a bottle had ever since been daily drawn from the imperial cellar, and nominally consumed by him and his successors. This was rather too strong, and led to further investigations; and the Empress informed her husband of the discoveries she had made. He read, and calculated, and ciphered, and thought long over the matter. At last he exclaimed, "If this goes on, I shall have to pledge my lands in order to pay for my table. There must be an end to this—*I will put myself out to board.*" And no sooner said than done. Next day the imperial kitchen existed no longer.

The Emperor made a contract for himself and his court. An enterprising purveyor undertook the supply of the whole Winter Palace, from the St. George's saloon down to the stable, and divided it into "stations." The Emperor and Empress were each to pay fifty rubles a day for their food; for the archdukes and archduchesses and all who ate at their table, twenty-five rubles per head; for the ladies and gentlemen of the court twenty rubles was the charge, for lower grades respectively fifteen and ten rubles, for the servants five, for the grooms three. A wonderful change ensued in the whole Winter Palace; the Emperor declared he had never dined so well before; the court, tempted by the more numerous courses, sat far longer at table; the maids of honour got fresh bloom upon their cheeks and the chamberlains and equerries rounder faces, and most flourishing of all was the state of the household expenses, although these diminished by one half. In short every one, save cook and butler, was content, and all this was the result of a bottle of rum, from which the Emperor Alexander, when heir to the crown, had been ordered by the physician to take a spoonful for the toothache.

As already mentioned, I frequently dined at the table of the "second station," which was provided with six dishes and a most capital dessert. The drinkables consisted of one bottle of red and one of white wine, two bottles of beer, one of kislitschi, and quass *ad libitum.* The wine was a light Burgundy; the beer, on the other hand, was particularly heavy; the kislitschi is a sour-sweet

drink, prepared from honey, water, lemon-juice, and a decoction of herbs; quass is the plainest and cheapest sort of drink, extracted from malt, sometimes from bread-crusts—and is commonly drank by the people; at first its taste is quite insupportable, but one soon gets accustomed to it and prefers it to any other beverage, especially in summer, on account of its cooling properties. It is very wholesome, not intoxicating, and constitutes the chief drink of the Russian people.

In no city in the world is there a greater consumption of ice than in St. Petersburg; not only of natural, but also of artificially prepared ice.

In bad (mild) winters there is often a great deficiency of natural ice, for enough is wanted to fill all the cellars not only of the city but of the surrounding country villas.

When the Neva is frozen to the thickness of a foot and a half or two feet, great slabs, five feet long and three feet wide, are hewn out of its icy covering, and with these the cellars are filled. The ice, however, is not stowed away in these great blocks, but is first crushed into small pieces, which are stamped down into a compact mass in the cellars. This mass again freezes into solid layers of ice, the lowest or ground-tier of which is never taken out, when the cellars are well constructed, but remains perpetually there, a frozen foundation two or three feet deep, upon which, each successive winter, fresh ice is piled up to a height of five or six feet. Ice is deemed such a necessary of life in St. Petersburg, that the finest house would obtain no tenant if its ice-cellar were bad. People literally cannot exist there without ice. It is in constant use. In the first place, all kinds of eatables—meat, milk, butter, &c.—are kept in the ice-cellar. Then it is mixed with water, beer, quass, and with almost all cold drinks. When there is a superfluity of it, the Petersburgers place it on the stoves and under the beds, to cool the apartments. In short, they never can have too much ice.

Vast quantities of artificial ice are also consumed; not only at parties, at the theatres, and for family use, but even in the public streets. Men perambulate the city, bearing great tubs upon their backs, the tubs enveloped and covered with wet cloths to protect them from the heat of the sun, and crying their ice for sale, just as

formerly at Berlin pickled gherkins were hawked through the streets, and as lampreys are at the present day. This ice, which I never tasted but once, has no very agreeable flavour; I was told, however, that I should soon get used to it and like it, which I am the more disposed to believe because the same thing had occurred to me with respect to quass.

Fresh fruit is never eaten by the Russians until it has been blessed by the priest; a highly judicious sanitary measure, inasmuch as it never obtains the blessing until it is perfectly ripe; then it is taken to the church, where the ceremony is performed with great solemnity. The Russian clings uncommonly to all ecclesiastical usages; on no account would he transgress this precept. On foot or horseback, or in a carriage, he never passes a church without making the sign of the cross; before the image of his patron saint, he dismounts to perform this devotional ceremony. He has another practice, to appearance less reverential; he never meets one of his popes (priests) without spitting. This he does neither from contempt nor from hatred; it is simply a custom, with whose meaning and origin I do not believe that he himself is acquainted. At any rate, I took the utmost pains to discover them, but without the least success.

CHAPTER X.

OFFICIAL PENSIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

PROMINENT amongst the numerous absurdities current concerning Russia, is the tale of the enormous pensions enjoyed by government officers, and of the still more monstrous frauds and embezzlements of which such officials render themselves guilty.

With respect to the first of these two points, it is perfectly true that every government officer has a right, after twenty-two years' service, to a *full* pension; that is to say, to a pension equal in amount to the salary of the office he has held. This, however, cannot be considered an excessive allowance, when we bear in mind

that in Russia the largest pay or salary (I except the very highest civil and military employments, such as field-marshals, ministers, or ambassadors) does not exceed four thousand rubles, or something more than one hundred and fifty pounds sterling. In Prussia or Austria, would not a general or counsellor of state, after twenty-two years' service, receive at least as large a pension? This elucidated, I proceed to the second point, which is linked with and explained by the first. With a view to limit the pensions, nobody receives a higher salary than four thousand rubles. But as it is manifest that many state officers, merely as a consequence of their official rank and position,—could not possibly exist on such pay, a number of temporary advantages and emoluments are conceded to them, which expire on their becoming pensioners. Only a small portion of these allowances, such as table money, contingent expenses, &c., are paid to them in cash.

Independently of the above-named consideration with respect to pensions, the imperial government here proceeds upon the principle of personally interesting the chiefs of the various branches of the administration by giving them a share in their advantages, thus making them more free and independent, and thereby acquiring a right to lay upon them a so much the stricter responsibility. As regards this principle of responsibility, it is certainly at times carried out to an absurd extent; reasons are not listened to when proffered by the chief of a department; a misfortune is imputed as a crime to him under whose administration it has occurred. A revolt in a company dishonours a commander; a nail in a horse's foot may easily lose an equerry his place; the defalcation of a clerk is the ruin of the chief of his division. Hence the rigid and severe responsibility which every official, from the highest downwards, lays upon his immediate subordinates; and as this responsibility cannot possibly be a reality without a certain freedom of action, the result is a sort of official despotism, which one must have seen and studied in Russia before comprehending to its full extent the meaning of the word bureaucracy. Upon this principle of responsibility is erected the entire edifice of the public service.

Every official is an absolute lord and master so far as his responsibility extends. The same principle is applied to the financial

portion of the administration. Those government servants to whom money is confided for the use of their departments, are at perfect liberty to manage it in the way that seems good to them, and even to their own best advantage, so long as they strictly fulfil their duty as far as their responsibility extends. A groom in Germany, no matter in how good condition were his horses, would be severely blamed or punished if convicted of having made away with even the smallest portion of their corn, or of having neglected to litter them well down; on the other hand, he is not answerable for their sickness or death if he can show that it has not arisen from neglect of his. In Russia it is very different; there he may give his horses brickbats for straw, and May-flies instead of oats, so long as they look and work well; on the other hand, their sickness or death is *his* fault, though twenty physicians certified the contrary. How far this principle is a good one I will not investigate; what is certain is, that it leads to the desired end; the means by which this is attained may not always be the most delicate, but the system and circumstances I have just displayed are to a great extent an extenuation. Thus, for instance, in the case of an officer of my acquaintance, who was travelling in charge of horses belonging to the Emperor. The man has one of the best and kindest hearts under the sun, and yet he confessed to me that often, in bad weather, when he took up his night's quarters in a village, and no straw was to be obtained, he had the thatch taken off the peasants' cottages. "It grieved me," he said, "to see the rain pouring into the people's beds, but my horses must have dry litter; my *responsibility* was at stake." I was glad the houses were covered with straw instead of tiles, for I firmly believe that, in the latter case, he would have taken the villagers' bedding to lay under his horses. Yet, I repeat it, this was an excellent man; but he was a Russian, and the Russian knows nothing superior to the word "SERVICE." It must be admitted that from this word he often deduces very singular consequences. The same officer assured me that, during his whole journey, so long as he was on Russian ground, he never paid a kopeck for any thing. Every morning the mayor or burgomaster of the place brought him a receipt for what he had consumed, but steadfastly refused the money. This was assuredly out of no love for either the Emperor's

horses or the officer; *it was out of fear of the consequences of accepting payment.* In like manner, in all Russia, no postmaster will take money from a cabinet courier. He prefers losing the posting to risking having his horses driven to death. The government will never think of calling officer or courier to account for such non-payment; their responsibility extends only to the safe and punctual delivery of horses and dispatches.

The same state of things exists in the army. Commanders of all grades have their *obligations.* These they must fulfil, but the *manner* of their fulfilment concerns them alone. It is the colonel's business to purvey everything required by his regiment. Every necessary is specified and calculated, and he receives the sum total in the lump or the difference by monthly payments. He has a right, let us suppose for example's sake, to a hundred bushels of oats and five hundredweight of hay; but instead of taking those quantities, he takes twenty hundredweight of hay, and only fifty bushels of oats; the difference in value is allowed, credited, and paid to him, openly and without concealment, as his own private and legitimate profit. The technical expression for this practice is "*to economise.*"

One of the most curious exemplifications of the workings of this system is to be found in the mode of remounting the cavalry. This is more easily managed in the provinces than in the capital, the requirements being less rigorous in country garrisons with line regiments than at St. Petersburg with the guards, not one of whose horses must differ from the others a hair in colour, or a half inch in height. And splendid horses they are, and the task a hard one to discover and supply them.

The imperial government exacts much and pays little. For a hussar horse I believe the allowance to be four hundred rubles banco, and for a dragoon horse five hundred; but I am not sure of these figures, nor are they of the least importance, for whatever is paid is notoriously not a third of the real value. Colonels of regiments set their pride upon their troop horses, and yet do not contribute a doit from their own pockets towards purveying good ones. The way the thing is done is this: the richest and most ambitious of the young officers are sent upon remount-duty. These young men make it a point of honour to execute this duty in a brilliant

manner, and to earn the favour and good opinion of their chiefs, and so it often happens that a young subaltern expends, out of his pocket, a sum equivalent to a small fortune, paying 1500, instead of 500, rubles for every horse—sacrificing 40,000 or 50,000 rubles and half ruining himself to enjoy the fame of having brought a good remount. If he be so rich that he can afford to despise the government allowance, he throws the helve after the hatchet, and pays the whole price himself; the colonel recompenses him with his esteem, and has made an "economy."

In this system of responsibility, as in almost all Russian laws and regulations, the fundamental idea has much to recommend it; but the disadvantages of the best possible idea may often be counteracted by the manner in which it is carried out. All I have endeavoured to prove is, that, if there be much that is objectionable in the manner in which is applied the system I have here exhibited, on the other hand, that manner of application is not literally an infraction of the law, and consequently does not deserve the hard names often applied to it in Germany.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RUSSIAN POLICE.

THE position of the police in this singular country is very peculiar. Russia is a "police-state," in the strictest sense of the word; and as everything in the country is subjected to their superintendence, so also is their responsibility enormous. To save this as much as possible, they (especially the subaltern officials) keep themselves within the very letter of their orders, from which literal observance the grossest absurdities often arise. There is a standing order of the police that, on the breaking up of the Neva, as soon as the thaw is announced to the police, agents are to be stationed on both banks to prevent the accidents which would arise from persons attempting to cross. It has not unfrequently happened that the Budschniks (policemen acting as street guardians), to whom the

execution of this order has been entrusted, have taken it too literally, and have not only prevented persons crossing from the side of the river on which they were stationed, but also would not suffer those to land who, when the river began to break up, were already upon the ice, and with peril of life had reached the shore. These were forcibly repulsed by the Budschniks, because the letter of their instructions was to let no one cross the ice. A similar too-literal interpretation of the regulations in case of fire caused a terrible calamity at the burning of the Lehmann Theatre, as I shall presently have occasion to relate.

Who has not heard tell of the great trouble and difficulty occasioned to foreigners by the Russian passport system? And yet, to those who choose to ascertain the simple routine of the business, the trouble is very trifling. On his arrival in St. Petersburg, the stranger receives a *carte de séjour*, or permission of residence, in exchange for which he delivers up his passport, which is deposited in the archives of the Alien Office until his departure. Once a week, for the three weeks preceding his departure from Russia (journeys in the interior of the country do not require this formality), he must advertise his intention in the Petersburg Journal. In cases of pressing haste, the three advertisements may succeed each other at shorter intervals. The day after the appearance of the third, he lays the advertisement before the Schasneprice, or police commissary of the quarter. If, during the period of advertisement, no one has applied to this officer, and made opposition to the delivery of the passport,—on account of debts, or the like,—the commissary delivers to him a formal certificate to that effect. With this, the foreigner betakes himself to the Passport Office, addresses himself to the official charged with the dispatch of strangers, and hands him his card of residence, the three advertisements, the Schasneprice's certificate, and a twenty-ruble note. The official takes charge of all these things, and courteously requests the person from whom he receives them to return at three in the afternoon, when he may reckon on being most politely received and speedily expedited. If this is *not* the case, the fault is that of the foreigner alone, who assuredly has forgotten to give in one of the four *documents* above enumerated, and of which the official asks only for the

first three, leaving the fourth to be thought of by the applicant, who has, consequently, only his bad memory to blame if he does not get his passport until a little reflection indicates to him the sure means of accelerating its delivery.*

One of the principal duties of the police is to display great activity in the event of fires. The arrangements for the extinction of fires are excellent in St. Petersburg. Cries of "fire" are unknown there. On elevated points, towers, and columns, disposed for the purpose, watchmen are stationed both by night and by day; who, at the first signs of fire, pass telegraphic signals, and thus warn the authorities in the surest and quickest manner. The measures taken in such cases are so rapid and well organised, that a fire is usually got under within a very short time of its first outbreak. With rare exceptions,—as, for instance, that of the conflagration of the Winter Palace,—damage by fire is seldom of much extent. The third story may be in a light flame; but not on that account does it occur to the occupants of the second floor to remove their furniture. The exertions of firemen and engines are certainly greatly aided by the solid style of building.

As soon as the authorities reach the scene of the fire, all other labour is suspended. The regular firemen set to work, and with so much zeal and judgment, that the raging element is seldom allowed to make much head. One thing that strikes the eye especially, on these occasions, is the great beauty of the horses that drag the engines. Many of them are animals of the noblest breeds, of the most beautiful colour and form, and, what is yet stranger, they cost the authorities not a single kopeck. Here is the solution of the enigma. We will suppose you, a foreigner, in company with a friend, to be making your way through the throng that fills the principal streets of St. Petersburg, looking anxiously and carefully about you, in order to effect a passage unharmed through the dense

* In this, as in some other passages of Mr. Jerrmann's book, a doubt remains upon the reader's mind, whether he speaks earnestly or ironically. Notwithstanding, however, his evident disposition to look favourably on Russian institutions, we can hardly suppose him seriously to uphold, or even to palliate, so annoying, expensive, and corrupt a system as is exemplified in the above paragraph.—T.

lines of carriages that fill the Newsky, the Morskoy, &c., and getting cautiously out of the way of the brilliant and swiftly-rolling equipages. See how differently the Russian behaves. Calm, careless, undismayed, he goes to and fro through the mob of vehicles; and, in reply to your apprehension lest he should be driven over, his word is, "*They dare not.*" Acting upon the principle, no fallacious one either, that most accidents from being run over occur in consequence of the driver's carelessness, the Russian government passed a law, which briefly says:—"Whosoever runs over a person shall be forthwith arrested, his hair shall be cropped, and he be sent to serve as a soldier: the carriage and horses shall be confiscated and given over to the police, who will appropriate the latter to the use of the fire-engines. If the person run over be killed, or badly hurt, the owner of the carriage shall support the charges of interment or cure, and further shall compensate the family of the person killed." The first of the penalties included in this decree can be bought off; and instances have been known of masters paying 1000 rubles, and more, for the redemption of a coachman who had rendered himself liable to it. The law is somewhat severe; but it is also wholesome and necessary, to protect the public from mishap.

Notwithstanding the protective severity of this enactment, many persons are run over; and, notwithstanding the excellent arrangements for the extinction of fires, great conflagrations occasionally occur, whose grievous extent and fatal results are sometimes attributable to the too literal observation of beneficial regulations. Of this, the following case is a melancholy instance.

The greatest, and also the most completely national, festival of the Russians is the Maslinizza. This is the close of the carnival; or, rather, the people's own carnival. It lasts for the entire week immediately preceding Lent, and extraordinary preparations are made for it. The centre and chief scene of this grand festival is the square of the Admiralty; upon which, for fully a fortnight beforehand, are erected booths and temporary theatres—most various in form, size, and description. Next to the humble stalls of dealers in chesnuts and gingerbread, stands the extensive circus of a De Bach or Lejars; hard by the booth where marionettes dance and juggle, rises the colossal stage of an Italian pantomime· here a

temporary tavern props itself against the walls of a menagerie. The seemingly-confused medley of buildings is, however, arranged on a fixed plan, and intersected by streets for carriages and horsemen, and by innumerable footpaths. Early on the morning of the first day of the Maslinizza, the vast place is crowded with people;—all Petersburg is on its legs, hastening to and from the fair. All business is suspended; for these eight days are exclusively devoted to uproarious popular diversions. So long as they last, there reigns pure and unlimited social democracy; no drunkenness is punished; no nocturnal rovers are taken up; even detected thieves are rarely given up to the police, but, instead, often receive upon the spot some slight punishment, according to Lynch-law—although the heavy fists, which, on such occasions, are seen clenched and uplifted, make it probable that the culprits would prefer the grasp of justice to such summary chastisement. From early dawn, the greater portion of the immense fair is crammed with the lower classes of the people; compared with the tumult, pressure, and congregation of men, what are the fairs of Leipzig, Frankfort, or Beaucaire? Foreigners are wanting, whose presence is certainly the most characteristic feature of the French and German mercantile fairs; but, in respect of crowd and noise, the latter are far below the Petersburg Maslinizza. Towards two or three o'clock, the whole of the theatres, which, during those eight days, give two performances daily, disgorge the vast mass of their spectators, who flow down, in long, compact streams, to the Admiralty Square, and take a sort of wandering possession of it. Soon afterwards, the equipages of the wealthy classes, also coming from the theatres, fill the carriage-roads through the fair, and drive to and fro, slowly and in long lines, through the temporary streets of the markets and the dense throng of foot-passengers. The royal family seldom fail to make their appearance in this brilliant procession, which the populace greet with joyous acclamations. After an hour's drive in sledges and carriages, the richest and most elegant of these usually proceed to the Newsky Perspective, where their occupants alight, and form the most brilliant promenade it is possible to behold. What colossal wealth and exquisite taste are there displayed! In costly equipages alone, millions are there accumulated. The value of many a four-

horse team there pacing up and down, would be an independent fortune for a German burgher of modest pretensions. And then the furs! what countless sums have been expended upon those beautiful furs, light as Persian shawls, but of a warmth that defies all the rigours of a Russian winter! After the promenade on the Newsky comes dinner, followed by fresh visits to theatres and concerts. And till far on in the night, the streets are filled with a giddy, half-drunken multitude. At last, those who are in a condition to find their houses return home: those who, after much reeling, and staggering, and running to and fro, fail in discovering their domicile, and lie or fall down in the kennel, or at the street-corner, are gathered up by the police and patrols, and conveyed to the guard-house. In ordinary times they would not be released next morning without some slight memento of the hospitality accorded them; but during the Maslinizza, it is different; and after sleeping off their liquor on a camp-bed, in a warm room, they are suffered to depart unpunished, to recommence the coarse sensuality of the previous day.

Twelve or fourteen years ago, the most successful and popular of all the entertainments assembled on the Admiralty Square during the Maslinizza, was that given by the celebrated pantomime company of the German manager, Lehmann. There was a perfect rage for these pantomimes; all Petersburg flocked to see them; and, although they were repeated every two hours, the temporary theatre in which they were played was continually filled to suffocation. During one of the morning performances, whilst the pit was in full glee and uproar of delight, the harlequin suddenly rushed upon the stage, and exclaimed, "Fire! *sauve qui peut!*" The announcement was received with a general burst of laughter at what was taken for a stupid joke. The misapprehension was fatal, for it shortened the brief space during which escape was possible; in a few moments the flames burst out from behind the scenes; the wooden building was in a blaze. The audience, wild with terror, rushed to the doors; unfortunately these opened *inwards*, and the pressure of the frantic throng closed them as effectually as iron bars and bolts. Exit was impossible. Outside, a workman, who had assisted in the building of the theatre, stepped forth from the crowd and called for an axe, declaring that he knew every joint of the

boards and beams, and could quickly open a passage for the imprisoned audience. But the *budschnik* or policeman on duty would not permit this to be done till his superiors came to decide upon the matter. At last, urgent necessity overcoming every other consideration, the punctilious police agent was pushed aside, several men seized axes, and soon a large opening was made in the side of the building. A dense cloud of smoke made the crowd recoil, and, when it had cleared away, a horrible spectacle presented itself. In closely packed masses sat men, women, and children, apparently still gazing at the stage, which was a sheet of flame. Rescue had come too late; the sudden smoke, filling the crowded building, had stifled the entire audience: not one was saved.

CHAPTER XII.

RUSSIAN JUSTICE.

THERE is much analogy in Russia between the administration of justice and that of the police. Most of the Russian laws are excellent; unfortunately the intentions of the law-givers are but too often neutralized by the conduct of those appointed to administer them. It is evident that in every country the right working of the laws depends entirely on their administrators, and here is the weak point where Russia's imperfect state of civilization is most plainly manifested. The administration of justice is also rendered doubly difficult by the circumstance that the whole Russian legal code consists of a mass of ukases, which in the progress of centuries has assumed such enormous proportions, that hundreds of waggons would hardly suffice to transport it. Amongst these ukases are naturally found many which contradict each other. And (especially of late years) a new ukase has not always contained a clause expressly annulling those in a contrary sense and of earlier date. Hence the most important branch of Russian jurisprudence became a knowledge of all these numerous ukases, since the production of one of remote date often caused the decision of a tribunal to be diametri-

cally opposed to what it would have been according to the decrees more generally known and commonly acted upon. The Emperor Nicholas, discerning this great evil, appointed, immediately after he ascended the throne, a special commission of revision, whose task it was to sort all these various ukases, to arrange them and bring them into keeping with each other, and finally, out of the heterogeneous and discordant mass, to form one appropriate and harmonious code of laws. The work was completed several years ago, and the result was more than twenty folio volumes. A second commission was then appointed, and has ever since been toiling, to reduce these compendious tomes to dimensions more compact and practically useful. Thus, step by step advancing, Russia may hope, in due time, to possess a regular code, remedying the evils and supplying the wants that the country so long has felt.

Yet, even in their present state, the Russian laws are not only adapted to the spirit and character of the people, but are also for the most part humane, far more so than accords with popular notions of Russia. Justice is cheap, and fees exist not. Stamps excepted, a lawsuit may be carried through and decided without costing a kopeck to either of the parties concerned. So the law ordains. But how is this carried out? At the very first step taken by the plaintiff in a cause, the clerk or secretary finds that the paper handed in is totally incorrect in its form, and politely requests that it may be drawn up a second time in a more regular manner. This is neither more nor less than an indirect demand for twenty rubles banco. The uninitiated in such matters, who finds his petition (in Russia everything is a "petition") perfectly regular, and insists upon its reception, may rest assured that it will be duly shelved and so remain; on the other hand, persons initiated in the mysteries of Russian justice, rectify the imperfections of their "petition" by handing in the twenty rubles, by virtue of which they may rest assured that no exception will be taken to its form, and that their suit will be advanced one stage. But it unfortunately happens that the smallest lawsuit necessitates some twenty or more such "petitions," each one of which must be weighted with the stimulative *douceur* of twenty rubles, so that, although exempt from legal charges, the gainer of a suit often finds himself out of pocket to twice the amount

he has recovered. Whether or not the Russian officials adopt this mode of proceeding with the friendly and highly moral view of disgusting people of lawsuits, and of inducing them to resort as much as possible to amicable compromise, there can be no doubt that that is the end they attain.

It is a proverb in Russia, that "every man gets his rights—who lives long enough;" and the fact is, that it is often less difficult to establish one's right than to obtain its official recognition. Thus it happened that a certain person had duly won his lawsuit, but his utmost endeavours were insufficient to get possession of the judgment. At last he had recourse to stratagem. He went to the magistrate who had had the decision of his affair, exposed to him the nature of his solicitation, and after hearing, in reply, an exposition of the numerous difficulties which opposed themselves to the fulfilment of his wish, the pressure of business, &c., &c., he took out his pocket-book, and extracted from it a packet of bank-notes, which he tore in half. One of the halves he handed to the man of law, and replaced the other in his pocket. "These halves," he said, "are valueless apart, and useless to both of us. I consider mine as lost; it depends upon yourself to restore their full value to those in your possession." On the morrow this ingenious person had a call from a very friendly and gentlemanly man, who made him the benevolent offer to exchange the much desired judgment, which he had with him duly and legally drawn up, against the valueless halves of the bank notes.

As a striking example of the singular action of the "responsibility" system upon the minds and moral perceptions even of upright and highly respectable men, and of the manner in which, upon occasion, they are found to limit their views to the material advantage of the state, even at the cost of private individuals, I take an anecdote of the official life of Cancrin, the famous Russian finance-minister. One of his spies—no branch of the Russian administration is without these—brought him intelligence that a receiver-general of the revenue had misappropriated large sums of money. In most countries the natural consequence of such a denunciation would be an immediate investigation of the accused person's accounts. Cancrin did nothing of the sort. He went into his office, and called out

aloud to a secretary, who sat at the further end of the hall, "to give notice to those officials whom it concerned, that upon that day week there would be a general inspection of all the public money-chests of the metropolis." Of course the defaulter was informed of this within the hour. Off he ran to Jew and Turk, and borrowed for a few days the amount of his deficiencies. The week elapsed, and the inspection began. The finance-minister himself came to the accused person; his books were checked, and the balance they exhibited was compared with the state of the treasury. Thanks to his money-lending friends, the amounts coincided to a kopeck. With a well-pleased glance Cancrin had the money restored to its iron coffer, locked it with his own hand, and—put the key into his pocket.

An hour afterwards the receiver-general received his dismissal. Thus he escaped Siberia, justice was cheated, and several innocent persons—perhaps honest men, who had been eager to oblige and serve him—were defrauded of their money. But the State lost nothing, and the minister saved his "responsibility." Thus are the laws evaded in Russia, but not in all cases with so much apparent lenity.

The humanity of Russian legislation has long since abolished capital punishment, with the sole exception of cases of high treason. Even after the great military conspiracy of 1825, only seven of the chiefs atoned for their crime with life: surely a small number of executions for a plot whose ramifications were so extensive. The knout, which replaces capital punishment, is certainly a terrible infliction; but here also do the widely spread popular notions on the subject demand rectification. With us "Russia" and "knout" have become such identical ideas, that one is inclined to believe that the slightest infraction of the law may bring the most honest of men under the frightful thong, which every police subaltern is supposed to be at liberty to inflict by the warrant of his own will. The fact is, that in Russia a criminal can be sentenced to the knout for no other offences but those which in Germany would be punished by death, and such sentences are never executed without an authorisation from the Emperor himself, signed with his own hand. The number of blows seldom exceeds six; it is certainly a fact that the first often suffices to kill a man; nevertheless, instances have been

known where criminals received ten, and yet survived to make a long atonement of their fault by labour in the Siberian mines. The most frightful circumstance relating to the knout, and that upon which its mournful celebrity is doubtless founded, is the abuse that was formerly made of it. As recently as in the time of the Emperor Paul, the sentence to punishment by this fearful instrument often emanated purely and directly from the sovereign's arbitrary will. By such order and authority was a pope, who kept a reading club, condemned to the knout and to banishment for life to Siberia, for having circulated a prohibited book. Thus also did the sense of justice (coupled with extreme severity) of that Czar pronounce an equally terrible sentence upon the person guilty of a certain offence which had been committed in the garrison. The affair was of a delicate nature, and very probably had reached the ears of the Czar in a distorted form. Meanwhile, in his first anger, he had pledged his word for the carrying out of the penalty, and had named a committee of investigation, whose researches it would have been difficult, indeed impossible, for the real culprit to escape. To avert the horrible misfortune that must have ensued, a non-commissioned officer of the Preobressentschy grenadiers generously sacrificed himself for his young chief, and gave himself up as the guilty person. The committee, who already had their misgivings, felt themselves relieved from an oppressive burthen and responsibility. Examination and execution were accelerated to the utmost; influential intervention converted the corporal punishment into a mere ghastly mockery, and the devoted grenadier departed for Siberia, where he lived in abundance, until a cabinet-courier, despatched by a new Emperor, recalled him to receive his reward. The signature of his recall is said to have been the very first act of the young Czar.

Such arbitrary sentences are no longer passed, and the present Emperor might be blamed rather for his too great lenity than for his severity. To this day, as regards the bureaucracy, the celebrated "dubina" of Peter the Great would frequently find very appropriate employment. It is undeniable that justice and police are the *partie honteuse*, the shame and scandal, of the Russian empire. The Emperor, who knows everything, but who cannot remedy everything, does his utmost to abate the evil, and made an important

step towards abolishing the most crying abuses, by the appointment, some seven years ago, of the excellent Perowsky to the post of minister of the interior. Yet it is a question whether even this man of rare ability will succeed in opposing an effectual and permanent barrier to the flood of official corruption. Admirably qualified though he be for his Augean task, it may still be doubted whether he will escape the countless intrigues and cabals organised against him by the thousand-headed monster he has to combat, and which he threatens in its innermost intrenchments. In the army of officials he finds his bitterest enemies, against whose malice he is upheld only by the Emperor's favour, and by the hearty good wishes of the people, who adore him, and who see their great gain in his steadfast exertions.

To prove to the administration of the police what venal officers were to be found in its ranks, he once sent for its chief, and communicated to him information he had received, that every night, in a particular house, prohibited games of chance were played. He asked for two of the most trustworthy officers, and sent them at night to the house in question. It was surrounded, and the two agents went up stairs to the apartment that had been indicated to them. There they found a party of six or eight gentlemen, seated at a round table, in the full enjoyment of a game at *faro*, and with heaps of gold before them. Caught *in flagranti*, the disconcerted gamblers were about to be conveyed to the guard-house, when one of them managed to make the two police tyrants understand that "*écarté*," which they had just been playing, was a very harmless amusement; that the pile of gold upon the table was no evidence against them; that they were in the habit of playing this game—which was one of skill, not of chance—for very high sums; and, to prove this assertion, he offered to play a game at *écarté* with each of the police agents, at 1000 rubles a game. The agents accepted the offer, as well as the 1000 rubles, took themselves off, and next morning the chief of the district reported to the minister that the visit to the suspected house had produced no other result than the discovery of a party of gentlemen harmlessly amusing themselves with a friendly game at cards. Perowsky sent for the two police agents, heard their report from their own mouths, and then, turning

to their chief, who was present, "Learn," he said, "what dependence you can place on the men in whom you confide, and who should be the guardians of the public welfare." And, opening a side door, he disclosed to the astonished officials the gamblers of the night before, sitting round a green table, in the same order, and engaged in the same prohibited game. Disguised, and with a long false beard, Perowsky went about to shops and stalls, purchasing sugar, meat, and butter, and checking the weight of his purchases. Many shops were closed, but the housewives of St. Petersburg rejoiced at the augmentation of weight and measure.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SHOW OF BRIDES.

I HAVE already spoken of the public buildings of St. Petersburg, and I ought not to have omitted mentioning amongst them the Michaelow Palace, of tragical fame. This palace, once so brilliant, with its ditch, drawbridges, and palisades, and with the bronze equestrian statue of Peter the Great in its court-yard, is now transformed into a school for cadets; and the apartments in which imperial pomp and melancholy once reigned are now occupied by young, light-hearted, and industrious scholars. With the exception, it must be remarked, of *one room*, whose floor, doubtless, yet bears traces of a terrible event, for immediately after the fearful deed its doors and windows were walled up. At the present cheerful day the darkened casements look dismally forth upon the court-yard—gloomy memorials of sad days gone by. In that room the Emperor Paul met his death, "*struck by apoplexy.*"

At no great distance from this old palace lies the delightful Summer Garden, one of the pleasantest places of resort in St. Petersburg. Peter the Great laid it out, and in a room of the house which he built in it, is shown a piece of leather, the first that was tanned in St. Petersburg, and which still bears marks of the teeth with which the great Czar bit into it in his wild extravagant joy at

this new step of the civilization he had promoted. At the present day there are nowhere such good tanners as in Russia, and nowhere are furs so well dressed and prepared for use. This is proved by what I have elsewhere mentioned with respect to the raccoon-skin coats (Schuppenpelze), which may be bought at much lower prices in Germany, but which, on arrival in Russia, require to be thoroughly dressed again before they become soft, durable, and agreeable to wear.

One of the boundaries of this Summer Garden is towards the quay, and is separated from the Neva only by a carriage road. The charm of the finely grown trees, of the enchanting walks and alleys, of the fine statues and pleasant resting places, is enhanced by the proximity of the colossal barrier of wrought iron, which is probably unequalled in its style, and whose beauty and renown furnished occasion for a thoroughly English piece of folly. A son of Albion, who had long cherished a wish to see the City of the Czars, chanced to hear or read of the rare elegance of this railing. The next day he embarked for St. Petersburg. On arriving at Cronstadt, the search of the vessel by the custom-house officers was martyrdom to his impatience; he threw himself into a skiff and sailed up the Neva as far as the Summer Garden,—the great object of his dreams and aspirations. His guide book in his hand, he lay for hours stretched out in the boat, his eyes immovably fixed upon the wonderful railing. At last, by a violent effort, he detached them from the object of his admiration, and turning to the boatman, "What," exclaimed he, "can the city possess that is worth looking at after this? Take me back to Cronstadt!" And without having set foot in St. Petersburg, he betook himself once more to his foggy native land.

This Summer Garden possesses another attraction, which it shares with no other that I am aware of, save with the garden of the Tuileries at Paris. Like the chestnut-shaded avenues of the Tuileries, this garden is the afternoon resort of crowds of the most charming children, who repair thither, escorted by their mothers and nurses, to people the solitary walks, and make the shrubberies resound with their innocent mirth.

Fifteen or sixteen years later these children reappear upon the

same scene, but this time with less artless intentions, and to play a more perilous game. On Whitsuntide afternoon are there to be seen, ranged in long rows, dressed in their best, and often bedecked with costly jewels, the daughters of the middle class of Petersburgers. Matrimony is the object of the display. It is a Show of Brides.

Young bachelors, disposed to marry, now walk up and down the line of damsels, critically inspecting them as they pass. Should their eye indicate that they have made a choice, a matchmaking friend of the young lady's steps out of the rear rank, joins the would-be wooer, and takes a stroll with him through the garden, informing him of the girl's circumstances, of her family, dowry, housewifely qualities, &c., and obtaining from him similar information concerning himself. Should they so far come to an understanding that the consent of the lady and her parents alone remains to be obtained, the matchmaker conducts her candidate to the mother, who introduces him to her daughter, invites him to her house, and a wedding is the most usual result of the acquaintance thus singularly commenced. Odd as it may seem, experience daily proves that these marriages, originating entirely in the pleasing impression and sympathy awakened by a first glance, are for the most part productive of much happiness. This is, certainly, attributable in great measure to the fact that a Russian of the middle class expects very little from his wife; and the richer he is the less he expects. About the qualities and accomplishments which a German of the same class takes into consideration when selecting a wife, such as education, economy, and the like, the Russian troubles not his head. A rich Russian of the middle class requires nothing from his wife but that she should be handsome, dress with taste, appear elegantly attired the first thing in the morning, and sit all day long upon the sofa, doing nothing, or, at most, reading a novel or netting a purse. He detests to see his wife busied with domestic matters. These are occupations for servants, and should the mistress of the house make them hers, she would lower herself not only in her husband's eyes, but in those of all around her. To sit in state and receive company is the Russian lady's sole business. Under this state of things the education of children is of course much less

attended to than were desirable. The boys, however, regularly attend the schools, or are sent to board at educational institutions; and as to the girls, that which is required from them as women, is, as we have already seen, so very little, that how small soever the care bestowed upon their bringing up, it nevertheless is found sufficient. But I certainly do not advise any German to seek a wife at a St. Petersburg Whitsuntide Festival.

Wedding presents are not customary in Russia. On the other hand, there is a long-standing patriarchal custom, which has been preserved, with some variations, to the present day. I one morning met an acquaintance, who hurried by me with unusual precipitation.

"Whither away in such haste?" I asked.

"I have no time to spare," was the reply, "I have bread and salt to buy."

"Bread and salt! Have you not both at home?"

"I will tell you another time."

At our next meeting I received an explanation. From time immemorial there has existed amongst the Russians a custom that a person changing his house should receive from each one of his acquaintances a loaf and some salt. The meaning of the usage may possibly be the kindly wish,—May you never in your new dwelling be in want at least of these two things. As the people became more polished and refined, they brought the salt in a little barrel, and the bread on a plate or in a basket. Later still, when civilization led to luxury, these unadorned receptacles were exchanged for costly ones. The simple gift of bread and salt was presented in boxes and baskets of silver and gold. And at the present day the bread and salt are wholly omitted, and the casket stands for the contents. To avoid monotony the salt-box is replaced by a costly vase, the bread-basket by a service of plate or some other rich present. There is no change, however, in the formula of presentation. As though to excuse by verbal humility the exaggeration and extravagance of the gift, the donor never fails to beg kindly acceptance of "Bread and Salt."

CHAPTER XIV.

COACHMEN AND COURIERS.

IF the most striking view of St. Petersburg is certainly that which is obtained on approaching it by water, the entrance by the high road is not less interesting, although on a less grandiose scale. Particularly imposing is the first appearance of the city as it presents itself to the sight of the traveller advancing towards it from the south. The Moscow Sastawa is a triumphal arch, erected in honour of the troops who made the last campaigns in the East. It is very lofty, proportionably broad, composed entirely of cast iron, with bronze ornaments, and its simple grandeur has a striking effect. Through this gate of honour one passes immediately within the boundary of the city, the gilt cupolas of whose countless churches, rising like flaming signs at the horizon, seem to greet and welcome the visitor.

Those things which, in many large cities, so unpleasingly impress strangers on their first arrival—such as the dirt of artisans, the smell of tan-yards, the noise of forges, &c., are all banished from the vicinity of St. Petersburg. On the banks of the Neva, or on the quays, the traveller is greeted by the joyous songs and merry gossip of troops of young washerwomen, who there pursue their cleanly toils all the year round, braving the ardent heat of summer, and the iron frosts of a Russian winter. When the river is hard bound with ice, holes are cut in its frozen surface, and still the hardy laundresses follow their chilly avocation; and still by song and jest they strive to beguile its pains. Certainly there are no people in the world so cheerful at their work as is the Russian at his. He must sing, or he could not work. He sings at the plough as in the harvest-field; whilst tugging at ropes on ship-board, and over his glass in the tavern; on the box of the post-chaise, and on the top of the hay-cart. Singing, he accomplishes the most wearisome marches; singing, he goes into action, and singing he comes out of it—if he comes out at all, and with his due complement of legs and arms. Give him but his song and his wodka, and he needs nothing else to be perfectly happy. It is this innate cheerfulness of diposition that

enables him gaily to support the most painful hardships. True it is, that by nature the Russian is lazy; he would gladly pass his life singing, drinking, and sleeping, and then again awake to a similar round of sensual enjoyment. But when spurred to labour by necessity, nothing can exceed his fortitude and powers of endurance.

Observe yonder stately, six-foot high, comfortably full-bodied man, with his round face and still rounder beard, in the kaftan of fine green cloth, and the square cap of red velvet trimmed with fur. The man's habitual mode of life is the most comfortable imaginable; the *dolce far niente* is his profession, and only from time to time has he to make certain superhuman exertions. That is the Emperor's *body-coachman!* Off duty, he lives like a lord of the land. You probably imagine that the coachman's natural residence is the stable! but—to err is human!—our charioteer has never seen the stable since he received his last appointment. Whether the carriages be in good condition, the horses fat or lean, the harness suitable, he troubles not his head. Even as a chamberlain approaches the Emperor with the words, "Sire, the carriage is at the door!" so does a coachman of the second class present himself before the great chief of the stable department and say, "Alexei Iwanowitsch, the horses are put to!" Then the comely man with the beard rises from his chair, empties his glass, and descends deliberately into the court-yard; there a groom offers him his arm, leaning upon which he gently attains the coach-box, settles himself comfortably, and nods. At that nod the reins are handed to him, he winds them round his hands, stretches out both arms straight before him, settles himself firmly against the box—he neither can nor will sit—and, proud as the Emperor on his throne, he drives off. It might really be said that he does his work without moving hands or feet; the latter he hardly *can* move, for he is firmly planted upon them, and of the motion of the former you are not aware, for he guides the fiery horses with the pressure of the little finger. It is only out of affectation that, when he suddenly pulls up, he throws his body backwards, clasping both arms to his breast, like a person swimming. After a half-hour's drive, he returns home; the Emperor alights, and he drives to the court-yard. A groom runs to the horses' heads, another helps him off the box, he throws the reins to

a coachman, and walks away. His day's work is done. He has driven the Emperor—that is the whole of his duty. For that he has officer's rank, a salary of several thousand rubles, and lives in clover. But the medal has its reverse; for it may happen that the Emperor, on getting into his carriage, instead of bidding him drive to Kamini-Ostrow, gives the word "to Moscow;" and, just as he would have driven seven versts, in the one case, so he drives 726½ versts in the other, without pause or refreshment, without closing an eye or leaving his box. At certain distances along the whole road there are little houses built as halting-places for the Emperor Alexander; but Nicholas does not use them; he seldom alights till he reaches Moscow, and, the changes of horses being effected with lightning-swiftness, the coachman has hardly time to toss off a glass of *wodka*. At every post a fresh postilion gets upon the box with him; but the most the postilion is allowed to do is to urge on the horses; the reins never leave the coachman's hands, and thus he gets over the *one hundred and four German miles*, standing, with outstretched arms, without food, his attention unceasingly upon the strain, exposed to every possible variety of temperature—on the box of the carriage with twenty-four degrees of heat, and on that of the sledge with as many of cold. It has happened that, on his arrival in Moscow, he was unable to leave his box; four men lifted him off, he was perfectly stiff, his eyes were starting from his head, he had to be bled and put in a bath, before his stiffened limbs and overstrained nerves resumed life and suppleness. No German could endure such enormous fatigue; the Russian endures it with ease, when he *must* —*he* who would do nothing all his life long if he *might*.

The case of the cabinet-couriers is similar to that of the coachman. Two of the former are constantly on duty in the Emperor's cabinet. Perhaps at two o'clock in the morning an aide-de-camp brings to one of them a despatch for Lisbon or Naples; and half-an-hour afterwards the courier has left St. Petersburg. And fortunate may he think himself when such journeys fall to his lot; they are mere pleasure-trips, for he soon reaches the frontier, and then he makes himself comfortable—avails himself of railroads and of post-chaises; which latter, even were they everywhere as bad as on the road from Vienna to Prague, would still be state-carriages compared

to a Russian britschka. Seated on a board covered with a thick leathern cushion, in a wooden vehicle without springs or back to lean against, and on a level with the traces, the courier travels at full gallop over the most wretched roads, without rest or repose, to Odessa, to Chiva, or even to Port St. Peter and St. Paul, 12,800 versts from St. Petersburg. Add to this, that the courier, so long as he is on Russian ground, is forbidden, under pain of dismissal, to close an eye in sleep. On such tremendous journeys as the last referred to, nature becomes at last too powerful for duty to resist her call, and the harassed courier allows himself brief repose. But it has often occurred that when the despatches reached their place of destination, their bearer was unable to deliver them : he lay a corpse in the carriage.

Less fatiguing than the journeys of these couriers, but still far from agreeable to the foreigner, is the travelling with post-horses, or by diligences. By the first mode he is very much at the mercy of chance. If he quits St. Petersburg provided with a good *padroschnik* (an official document to procure him post-horses), and if he finds no competition at the posting-houses, he gets on pretty well. But if he has not the paper in question, or if there happens to be a demand for, and consequent scarcity of, horses at the relaying-places, he may abandon all calculation as to the probable progress of his journey, and resign himself to the will of Providence. Supposing him to have at last got his horses, and to have left the post-house far behind, he yet has no certainty when he may reach the next; for he may chance to fall in with a courier, or with an officer travelling on service, to whose horses some accident has happened, and who forthwith, and without the slightest ceremony, stops the luckless stranger, takes the cattle from his carriage, harnesses them to his own, and gallops off, perfectly indifferent as to the fate of the man whom he thus leaves horseless and helpless upon the Emperor's highway. The traveller by sledge—say even from Riga to St. Petersburg, between which places the road is tolerably good—may deem himself fortunate if he does not get lost in the night; and may thank, for his safety, the quick ears of his postilion, who, hearing his cry of distress, pulls up and waits until he can pick himself up out of the snow, into which (and out of the

sledge) a sudden violent jolt has shot him. I would strongly advise every body who has to travel from Petersburg to Moscow, or to the Prussian frontier, to go by the diligences; which, as far as Moscow, and also on the road to Tauroggen, are very comfortable, and arranged quite in the German manner. By these diligences the travelling is very rapid, and remarkably cheap. From Petersburg to Tauroggen the fare is somewhat more than thirty Prussian dollars (4*l.* 10*s.*) But as to those persons who are compelled to journey into the interior of Russia, I can only say "Heaven help them!"

At St. Petersburg, when the stranger alights, weary and worn-out, from his travelling carriage, he finds another little trial to pass through before reaching his hotel. The droschki which conveys him thither consists of a cushioned seat, four feet long, with a back one foot high, and with splash-leathers on both sides to keep off the mud. His safest plan, perhaps, is to sit astride on it; for, if he places himself sideways, he rather hangs on than sits, and is apt to find himself, at any moment, stretched at full-length on the pavement. This is very bad, although it is being almost continually repaired; but the nature of the soil, partly sandy, and partly marshy, is the cause that no good foundation can ever be obtained. Various streets, as for instance the Newsky Perspective, the Great and the Little Morskoje, and some others, are paved with wood, which is a great advantage both to those who drive through them, and to those who dwell in them. The houses in those streets where this mode of paving does not prevail, suffer greatly, particularly when the streets are narrow, from the vibration caused by the perpetual traffic. In consequence of this, even the Newsky lost one of its greatest ornaments; formerly it had on either side an alley of trees; to which, however, the constant rattle of carriages was so obnoxious, that the whole of them withered and died.

Independently of its being preferable as regards the duration of buildings and carriages, the wood pavement is as agreeable to those who drive in the latter, by reason of the uniform pleasant motion, as it is acceptable to those who reside in the former, on account of the great diminution of noise. For horses, on the other hand, it is very dangerous, especially in damp weather, when they easily slip down and injure themselves. This way of paving is extremely expensive,

even in St. Petersburg, where wood is nothing like so dear as in Germany. The labour of laying it down is also very great. First is placed a layer of masonry; or, better than that, of square-hewn blocks of wood, each about a cubic foot. These are fitted tight in; then the chinks are filled up with pitch, which is also spread over the entire surface. The wooden pavement comes over this. It consists of a second tier of square blocks, similar to those of the first layer, and disposed in precisely the same manner. The blocks are merely hewn with the axe, but it is wonderful with what exactitude this is done: they are all as precisely alike as one drop of water is to another, and are as smooth as if they had been carefully planed. This pavement lasts longer than the stone one, which is in more general use; nevertheless it is constantly under repair. Louis Philippe once proposed to pave all Paris at his own cost. It is difficult, in this instance, to give him credit for a generous motive, or to think that he had merely the improvement of his capital at heart; his object more probably was to supply barricade-makers with a softer material.

CHAPTER XV.

THEATRES.

FOR the beginning of the season, between the middle and the end of September, everybody returns to the capital, and only the highest nobility, the immediate court circle, remain in the country as long as the royal family stop there. At the end of October these also come back to town, and then approaches the period when St. Petersburg is seen in its greatest glory and brilliancy. It were labour lost to attempt to describe the splendour of the court festivals, of the balls, assemblies, and masquerades; to form a correct idea of them, one must have seen them.

The return of the court gives fresh life and vigour to the artistical world, and the drama flourishes in the beams of imperial patronage. The Emperor visits the theatres almost daily, especially the French play, which is particularly the court theatre. It stands

in the heart of the city, opposite the Michael's Palace, and was a birthday surprise of the Emperor's to the grandduchess Helena. Its exterior differing in no respect from that of the adjacent buildings, she had no notion of the existence of a theatre in the immediate neighbourhood of her palace, until the Emperor conducted her thither to witness the first performance.

The name of the Michael's Theatre was given to it in honour of her husband. Compared to the other theatres it is small, hardly so large as, certainly not larger than, the Berlin playhouse, but it is the most comfortable of all of them. Its unpretending and simple elegance, its cheerful aspect and commodious arrangement, particularly adapt it for a rendezvous of the best society. The whole house, both before and behind the curtain, is lighted—such at least was still the case in 1844—with oil, but so well lighted that there was not a corner where one could not easily read the smallest writing. And there is no lack of brilliant dresses, which at once benefit and are benefited by the good lighting. The internal arrangement of the house is capital. The stalls are as roomy and comfortable as arm-chairs, which is the name by which they go· boxes and pit are apportioned into a fixed number of places, and beyond that number no tickets are issued. Although there are broad passages through the pit and to the orchestra, no one, except the officer on duty, is allowed to stand up in the house; at the entrance, door-keepers, in rich liveries, receive the tickets and open the doors and seats; the servants who have charge of the refreshments are also in handsome liveries; everything, in short, is arranged with the utmost regard to comfort and convenience, with a sort of modest sumptuosity, and without consideration of expense. An even steady light is thrown upon the stage, which leaves nothing to be desired with respect to decorations, properties, and costumes. It is rather different when we come to the repertory of plays; that is a medley which I defy any one to comprehend. Setting aside high tragedy, to which they do not aspire, this French company, which upon the whole is not very strong, performs almost all the novelties that appear in Paris. They give farces, vaudevilles, comedies, dramas, even tragedies, such as Victor Hugo's *Angèle*. To these latter they are not equal, and their performance of dramas does not rise above re-

spectability. On the other hand, the performances at this theatre are excellent in the lighter styles of comedy and vaudeville, for which there is altogether a most effective company. But even to the higher style of comedy they are not uniformly equal. I saw them perform Molière's *Malade Imaginaire*, for one of the first appearances of Mademoiselle Dupont,—an excellent actress, whom I had known in Paris, whither she has lately been recalled by the management of the Théâtre Français. She appeared first in the part of the Duchess of Marlborough in *Le Verre d'Eau*, where, as in some other modern plays, she had very little to say. But in the *Malade Imaginaire* her talents made her conspicuous amongst all her comrades, and it was quite evident that she was the only performer in that company who understood how Molière should be acted. The French have very good, very capital actors; truth, however, compels me to declare that those at St. Petersburg, with the exception of Mademoiselle Dupont, were for the most part greatly overrated. Vernet and Paul Minet are first-rate comic performers; Dufour is an excellent actor of characteristic parts; Mademoiselle Alexandre Meyer was exquisite in naïve and sentimental characters, as was Madame Allan in a graver department. M. Allan was a very respectable sedate lover, and M. Bressan took the part of *premier amoureux*. Both were good actors, nothing more, but both were praised and prized as if they had been artists of the very highest rank; and the last-named was actually made an idol of, especially by the ladies. This, however, was all natural enough. The French theatre enjoyed the highest patronage; it had become the fashion, it was considered *bon ton* to frequent it, and its performances were subject of conversation in the most aristocratic drawing-rooms; the management did all in their power to keep up its brilliancy and vogue. All these things, combined with its real merits, could not fail to render it the spoiled child of the public; but, nevertheless, it was decidedly overrated. This theatre, too, was an example of the excellent influence an able administration—there represented in the person of M. Peissard—when properly supported by the directors, has upon the *ensemble* and "working together" of the whole enterprise.

If the Russian National Theatre is behind the French one in

public favour, it is before it in real merit; although, like the prophets, it is not duly honoured in its own country. I do not here refer so much to its merit as an artistic institution, as to the non-recognition of the talent of the performers, of which it unites a greater amount than any other theatre I am acquainted with. In Martinow especially, it possesses an actor, who, as the French say, is an artist to his very finger-ends. I do not hesitate to set him down as the greatest theatrical genius of the day. At any rate the celebrated Bouffé, who, in Paris, is held to be the first living representative of that line of acting, cannot support comparison with him.

The Russians allot the palm of good acting to the elder Karatejin, but I cannot coincide with their opinion, for I consider him an inferior artist to Martinow. At the same time I must observe that it is impossible to establish a comparison between tragedy, which is Karatejin's line, and the class of plays in which Martinow performs.

Of all the people of the earth, the Russian, perhaps, possesses the greatest faculty of imitation, and the most complete technical aptness to render it available. Of him it is literally true, that what his eye seeth his hand can do; but it is absolutely necessary for him to *see*, for invention he has none. That is visible in all his works; in his buildings, manufactures, trades, and even in his pursuit of art. But as an imitator he is unrivalled, and that is what makes him so good an actor of farce and comedy, which require less the creative power of imagination than the reproductive faculty, and an acute observation of the daily appearances of life. These he renders with wonderful fidelity. In his own speciality of mimicry he is quite unapproachable. I shall never forget the acting of Martinow in the Russian version of the *Père de la Débutante.* It was a masterpiece of art. The character of the father is considered in Germany a comic part, and the actor's efforts are directed to make his audience laugh. I laughed, certainly, at the Alexander Theatre, and more heartily than I remember ever to have laughed before, but the actor's intention to produce this effect was not discernible; the poor father was in no jocose humour; the unfortunate old fellow, on the contrary, endured the most frightful torments;

the sweat-drops hung upon his brow; the martyrdom of his part and his many sufferings, made the bright tears gush from his eyes. Insensibly a sort of remorse of conscience crept over me for laughing at such a poor, harassed, tortured creature in the midst of his pains. But yet, who could help laughing? Nevertheless, and in spite of the perfection of his acting, the palm of the evening was not for Martinow. The Russian adapter of the piece from the French had introduced a somewhat frivolous scene, in which the *débutante* is introduced to the director of the theatre. The actor, Samialow, availed himself of this opportunity to take off a former intendant of the theatres, Prince Narischkin. I did not know the original; but that the actor mimicked some person who had once existed, was quite clear to me, for there was individuality in every tone, look, and gesture. The audience was in an ecstacy of delight, particularly its older members, to whom was now presented a living reminiscence of their youth, and who, for the sake of this one scene, would never miss the performance at which they had, perhaps, already laughed full fifty times.

The house in which the Russians perform is the Alexander Theatre. It is about the size of the Berlin Opera House, but is not nearly so richly decorated. Indeed, I know no theatre which can approach the latter for the grandeur and brilliancy of its arrangement and fitting up. The Alexander Theatre is not inviting to the eye, not well lit, and especially not comfortable. The passages, leading to the seats, form a perfect labyrinth. Let no one, in the event of an alarm of fire, separate himself from the throng to seek exit by a side path; for only by a most extraordinary chance could he hope to succeed. It was in this theatre that I saw the Emperor for the first time. He came late, would not allow any one in the box to stand up when he entered, and, without ceremony, and in full view of the public, kissed all his children, great and small, so that you could hear it in the pit. The audience took not the least notice, and seemed quite accustomed to such patriarchal scenes.

The German company is by no means the most favoured in St. Petersburg. They perform alternately with the French at the Michael's Theatre, and use the French decorations, and whatever is

fixed and fast; but the elegant French wardrobe warns them off with a "*noli me tangere!*" The German wardrobe is very poor; the Russian theatre gives them some little assistance in this respect, but anything in the way of novelties is very hard to obtain. Earnest remonstrances are of little avail; more may be accomplished by an apposite jest. For instance, I once had to perform Belisarius; the costume was complete—all but the cloak, which was absent. Three successive requisitions for one were rejected. At last I addressed myself to General Gedeonoff, director-in-chief of the theatres; he referred me to the wardrobe of Karatejin, who played the same part, but was a man of gigantic stature. All my applications were fruitless; the constant reply to them was, "Take Karatejin's cloak." At last I retorted: "As your excellency pleases; but if I am to have recourse to Karatejin's wardrobe, the only thing I can do will be to borrow one of his handkerchiefs to wear as a Greek mantle." The general laughed, and signed an order for the necessary garment.

Besides the manager, every theatre in St. Petersburg has an official personage attached to it, whose duty is general supervision and to note casualties and deficiencies. At the German theatre this post was filled by a German *employé*, a good sort of fellow who troubled himself little with anything beyond seeing that the young figurantes and chorus-singers were nicely dressed. One day the Court suddenly announced its intention of being present at my benefit, then close at hand. Nobody was prepared for this novelty, and there was great bustle and running about in consequence. Messengers were scampering over the city, hunting for General Gedeonoff, who showed himself at the German theatre scarcely once in eight performances; the German superintendent had a grand parade of figurantes, walking gentlemen, &c., and inspected them from head to foot, and called me to account because one of them had dusty boots. I wondered what made him all of a sudden so anxious in his inspection. "The Court is coming," replied he, "that is a great rarity here, and everything must be clean and bright." "Certainly," I answered, "and so ought everything to be every day of the week, and if you would more frequently see that the boots are well polished, and all corresponding matters in good order, the Court would

doubtless oftener come to see the Germans act." The superintendent held his peace and went his way, whilst the French scene-painter, who had heard the conversation, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, parodying Charles X.'s famous *mot*, and pointing to the departing official, "*Ce n'est qu'un ennemi de plus!*"

At that time the German theatre was in a better state than it had been for years previously. At the performance for my benefit the Court were very much gratified. The Emperor testified to me, through General Gedeonoff, and subsequently, through Prince Wolkonsky, his gracious approbation of my exertions both as actor and as manager, sent me the next day a present of a costly diamond ring, but did not return to the theatre. Soon afterwards came Emile Devrient, provided with strong recommendations; the most influential persons at court interested themselves for his performances, but were unable to seduce the court, then resident at Peterhof, to a single one of them. At last their exertions were so far successful that the German company was allowed to give a performance at the Peterhof palace. The piece selected was the *Landwirth*, and Devrient was really capital; with him performed Lilla Löwe, a truly charming actress, whose marriage has been a great loss to the German stage. The performance went off excellently well, the audience were perfectly satisfied, and the next day Devrient received a valuable ring, but—no second performance took place, whilst the French company, although lacking the charm of novelty, had the honour, once a week or oftener, of being summoned to act at the country residence of the court. Such is the fate of German art, and of German artists.

The largest of the St. Petersburg theatres is the Stone Theatre (*Camino Theatro*), whose dimensions are quite colossal. There German and Russian operas and ballets are given. Although every thing possible is done to encourage the Russian opera, it has never yet been able to raise itself to the rank of the German, which in its turn was utterly eclipsed by the appearance of the Italian opera.

It was at Easter, 1842, that General Gedeonoff, then director of the imperial theatres at St. Petersburg, had the honour of being appointed by the Emperor Director in Chief of all the "imperial"

theatres in the empire. This appointment was a disastrous one for German theatricals in Russia. The comprehensive title in fact extended the general's power only to the Moscow theatres, for no other city in Russia has "imperial" theatres, but that extension sufficed to deal the deathblow to German dramatic art in St. Petersburg.

This is an appropriate place to say a few words concerning the character of the officer who exercises so important an influence on Russian theatricals. General Gedeonoff is a man of extensive acquirements, rare administrative talents, quick perception, interminable routine, indefatigable activity, and of almost incredible perseverance. He is good-natured, but passionate and violent. He loves art just as far as, and no farther than, the Court loves it; he patronises the style which the Court views with favour, and is apt, moreover, to estimate the value of a performance by the sum it brings in. From the moment of his appointment as Director-General of all the imperial theatres, he planned the establishment of an Italian opera in St. Petersburg—undeterred by the total failure of a previous attempt of the kind. In the autumn of 1842 he inducted a brilliant Italian company into the spacious Camino Theatro, and to this undertaking the sacrifice was, as usual, the Germans. To make room for the Italian opera, the German opera was sent to Moscow for that winter. But this was the death-warrant also of the German dramatic company, which was enabled to produce pieces of any importance only by the co-operation of the members of the operatic corps, through whose loss it was now so reduced in numbers—whilst nothing was done to fill up the vacancies—that the modest circle of its capabilities was very soon determined. According as the receipts diminished, the number of performances was lessened, until, towards the end of the winter, they occurred but once or twice a week; proof sufficient that they declined in favour in the same ratio as the cashbox grew lighter. The success of the Italians proving triumphant, they returned to St. Petersburg for the season of 1843–4, and again the Germans were packed off to Moscow. The result of the second season being as satisfactory as that of the first, in the spring of 1844 the Italian opera was permanently established in St. Petersburg, and the German, as might be expected, dispensed with. Such, in St. Petersburg, is the fate of

the beautiful in art. With the discarded operatic company depart ed also those members of the dramatic corps who had sufficient talents to ensure success elsewhere, or who were not detained in St. Petersburg by the prospect of a pension. The German theatre sank into its former mediocrity. The immense success of the Italians in St. Petersburg has maintained itself to the present day, and, if no warlike alarms operate unfavourably on their position, a long and brilliant popularity may be foretold them. The triumphs there achieved by some of the principal singers can hardly be described with mere words. Only those persons who have witnessed the enthusiasm of Spanish and Italian audiences can form an idea of them. Above all, Rubini, although he then possessed but *the tradition of his voice*, and the admirable Viardot Garcia, were the heroes of the day. The first was appointed singer to the imperial chamber, and Prince Wolkonsky himself was present in the Winter Palace at the ceremony of his investiture with the uniform of that post. At his benefit a golden laurel wreath was thrown upon the stage, and at Garcia's benefit such a rain of flowers fell around her that she literally waded through them, and they had to be carried off the stage in great wash-baskets. Bearing in mind that this was in February, when in St. Petersburg a rose costs twenty rubles, and a handsome garland or bouquet eighty to a hundred rubles, I shall not be exceeding the truth if I say that on that day a fortune faded on the singer's bosom. Could there be a more characteristic trait of the luxury and extravagance of the Petersburgers? Without positively asserting it, I yet fully believe that many a young man that evening laid the foundation of pectoral disease. What I *can* positively affirm is, that many sonorous powerful voices in my neighborhood, which, when the curtain fell, nearly deafened me with their furious acclamations and calls for the great singer, were totally extinct at the end of the uproarious interlude, which lasted full half an hour. During that time Garcia had to present herself at least twenty times to these extravagant admirers, who at last, completely hoarse and exhausted with such riotous applause, left the theatre to try to regain their voices against the next performance.

The ballet occupies a very prominent position on the St. Peters-

burg stage, and is cherished with infinite care. Indeed so great are the taste, artistic feeling, and pecuniary means expended upon it, that it may boldly place itself in competition with the first in Europe. The ballet-master, Titus, and the machinist, Roller, have done it good service; the *corps de ballet* is excellent, and amongst the most prominent native talent I may name Mademoiselle Adrianow, whose taste and *aplomb* in the performance of the most difficult steps cannot but content the most fastidious judges, and who in grace and elasticity is not inferior even to Taglioni.

I must not conclude this chapter without speaking of two institutions, whose like is nowhere to be found: I refer to the Institution for Pensions, and to the Theatrical School.

Upon the first of these two establishments all persons have claims who have served the stage in an artistical capacity, and for a period fixed by law. The mode of pensioning is various. Russians get a double pension, but must serve, in order to obtain it, twice as long as foreigners. The law prescribes that, after twenty years' service, and two years more, known as "grateful years," every artist, employed in an imperial theatre, has a right to retire on full pay. This full pay, however, never exceeds in Russia the sum of 4000 rubles banco, or 180*l.* sterling. But the fixed salary constitutes only a small part of the earnings of the more popular actors. Allowances for each performance (*feux*), and benefits, often multiply their profits five or six fold. Karatejin, Martinow, and others, draw fifty to a hundred rubles of *feux* every time they act; and their benefits at the great Alexander Theatre often bring them in 3000 rubles and more. When they have served their twenty years without interruption, a pension is decreed them, and they thenceforward receive, from the imperial treasury, the same salary as they before got from the theatre, but are bound to serve two more years, gratis; that is to say, that they receive from the theatre, during those two years, only their *feux* and the amount of their customary benefits. So that, in fact, they serve twenty-two years before they are completely pensioned. The two "grateful" years over, they are at liberty to retire from the stage, or—still drawing their 4000 rubles pension—to enter into a fresh contract with the management. As Russian actors, for the most part pupils issuing from the theatrical school,

usually go on the stage very ea ly, they often get a pension before they are forty years old, and can very well take a new engagement. As regards foreign actors, a different arrangement exists. To be eligible for a pension they need to serve only ten successive years, and the two "grateful" years are not required of them. The amount of their pensions was formerly regulated by that of their salaries, but of late years another plan has been adopted. By this the pensioners are divided into two classes. The first of these, consisting of persons whose salary was of 1000 rubles or less, receive pensions of 1000 rubles; all whose salary was above 1000, receive a pension of 2000 rubles, which is the highest given. This sweeping arrangement led to some odd results, which fortunately, however, were to nobody's disadvantage. Thus there was an instance of a member of the orchestra, whose salary was only 500 rubles, obtaining a pension of 1000 at the expiration of his ten years' service; twice as much, that is to say, for doing nothing, as he had received for working. Foreigners who obtain these pensions are at liberty to go and spend them where they please, and after their death they are continued to their wives and children. Lately, however, the term of service after which a foreigner may claim a pension, has been increased from ten to fifteen years.

The other institution to which I referred at the commencement of this chapter, is the Theatrical School, and a most remarkable institution it is. Founded originally on the model of the Conservatory at Paris, it is far more comprehensive and complete. I am unacquainted with the manner in which admission is obtained. It may depend on the personal recommendations of the children, or on the interest that can be made for them. All that I know is that, once admitted, every facility and advantage is afforded that may be expected to conduct the pupils to success and fame. They are lodged in a palatial edifice, which also includes the director's dwelling, his offices, the counting-house, theatrical library and wardrobe. Here, as in all the imperial schools, the most ample provision is made for the material and intellectual wants of the scholars of both sexes. The direction given to their studies is of course chiefly artistical. Besides the instruction usually imparted at schools, they have the benefit of the very best teachers of declamation, music

singing, dancing, rhetoric, drawing, &c. On the recommendation of Countess Rossi, General Gedeonoff sent to Vienna, in the year 1840, for that lady's former instructress, Madame Czecca, and installed her as chief of the singing department, with a salary of 4000 rubles. For St. Petersburg this appears rather poor pay. But it was the least part of the value of the appointment. The teacher of the most renowned of Germany's sweet singers was appointed to give lessons to the Grand-duchesses Olga and Alexandra, as well as to the daughter of the Grand-duke Michael. She became the rage at St. Petersburg; the highest of the Russian aristocracy were eager to have their daughters instructed by her who had taught Sontag; her lessons were sought at extravagant prices, and she was overwhelmed with rich presents. Without reckoning these last, Madame Czecca's yearly income was not less than 20,000 rubles banco. This was rather a different figure from that which her talent had achieved for her in Germany; at Leipzig, for instance, where, under the splendid management of Counsellor Küstner, she received 90*l.* sterling per annum as music mistress; or in Vienna, where the highest nobility think themselves extremely generous if they pay for the highest class of instruction in singing and music at the rate of two florins a lesson. At St. Petersburg Madame Czecca never gave a lesson at her own house under fifteen or twenty rubles; or under twenty-five or thirty rubles if she went out to give it. Once she went to the house of the Countess Scheremetiew rather after the appointed time, and pleaded, by way of apology, that owing to the very bad weather she had had to wait for a hackney coach. Upon the day fixed for the next lesson an elegant carriage went to fetch her, and when it had taken her home again, the coachman begged to know where he should put it up. Two lines from the Countess Scheremetiew begged her kind acceptance of "this little present."

CHAPTER XVI.

HENRIETTA SONTAG.*

LET not every singing mistress, however great her ability, anticipate such good fortune at St. Petersburg as that which Madame Czecca met with. She was indebted for her favourable reception to the gratitude of the amiable ambassadress, her former pupil, who not only recommended her, but sang at a public concert for her benefit. This would have been nothing for Mademoiselle Sontag; for the Countess Rossi, in the midst of the high Russian aristocracy, and of their haughty prejudices, it was an incredible deal. The concert was the most brilliant of the season, and its net proceeds were 14,000 rubles.

The day after the concert, Madame Czecca showed the Countess the cash account of its results.

"Ah! Henrietta," said she, "what have you done for me!"

"For you?" cried the Countess, and threw herself, sobbing aloud, into her arms. "For you? no, for myself! Ah! once more, after many years, have I enjoyed an hour of the purest and most complete happiness. Providence has done everything for me; has given me rank, riches, reputation, the love of a man whom I adore, the possession of hopeful and charming children: and yet, dear Czecca, how shall I explain to you? But you will divine my feelings: the element of my existence is wanting. The sight of a theatre saddens me;—the triumph of a singer humbles me;—the

* English readers will be apt to smile at the thoroughly German style and sentiment of this chapter, which I at first thought of omitting, as wholly irrelevant to the subject of the book, but afterwards decided literally to translate, (as literally, at least, as its complicated and exaggerated phraseology would permit,) that it might not be said that Mr. Jerrman's really interesting volume had been given to the English public in a mutilated form. For the same reason, I have retained the preceding chapter, on theatricals, portions of which address themselves more especially to actors and dramatic *dilettanti* than to general readers. It is hard to say from what reporter Mr. Jerrmann obtained his very minute and circumstantial account of Madame Sontag's rhapsodical conversation with Madame Czecca and affecting interview with the Armenian, or how far we are indebted to his imagination for the high-flown dialogue of this green-room pastoral.—T.

sound of the organ, which summons others to devotion, drives me from the sanctuary. I am a fallen priestess, who has broken her vow. Art, which I have betrayed, now spurns me, and her angry spirit follows me like an avenging spectre."

Bathed in tears, she sank upon the sofa.

"But Hetty," said Madame Czecca, trying to console her, "you are still an artist now as ever, and an artist you ever must be. You still practise your art, and if the circle you now enchant is but a small one, on the other hand, it is so much the more select. The admiration of princely saloons may well compensate you for the applause of crowded theatres."

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the Countess, springing quickly up, "nothing can compensate the artist for abandoning her vocation; —nothing, nothing in the wide world! They praise, and flatter, and worship me! What care I for all that? Can they do otherwise? They are all friends and acquaintances of my husband—our daily circle. I am still young, not ugly, courteous to every one. People are grateful for the momentary pastime I procure them. Perhaps, too, they are glad of opportunities to indemnify the singer for an occasional moment's oblivion of the Countess. But think, Czecca, of the stage with its heavenly illusions! the sacred fervour which thrills us on the curtain's rising! the passionate anxiety which impels us, and the timidity which holds us back; the feverish ecstasy that throbs in all our veins! Such must be the hero's emotion when he plunges, eager for the fray, into the battle's whirl, confident of victory, and yet full of anxious anticipations. And then the public!—that public over each individual member of which our knowledge as artists elevates us; but which, collectively, is the respectable tribunal whose verdict we tremblingly await;—you well know, my friend, how often we bitterly censure its caprices, how often we laugh amongst ourselves at its mistaken judgments; and yet, yet, it is this public, this combination of education and ignorance, of knowledge and stupidity, of taste and rudeness—this motley mass it is, which, for money, say for a single paltry coin, has purchased the right to be amused by us, and to avenge on our honour a disappointed expectation. To curb that wild power, and lead it away captive; to unite that vast assemblage, without

distinction of rank or refinement, in one emotion of delight, and to make it weep or laugh at will; to transmit to it the sacred fire of inspiration that glows in our own breast, to captivate it by the power of harmony, by the omnipotence of art: that is sublime, divine, —that elevates the artist above the earth, above ordinary existence. Oh, Czecca, Czecca! once more let me befool Bartholo, once more let me fall beneath Othello's dagger, amidst the echoes of Rossini's heavenly music, and no complaint shall again escape me: I then shall be content; for then I shall once again have *lived*."

She sank, sobbing, upon the sofa. A servant entered and announced a stranger, who earnestly insisted to speak with the Countess. A denial had no other result than to produce an urgent repetition of the request.

"Impossible!" cried the Countess: "I can see no one, thus agitated, and with my eyes red from weeping."

"Never mind that," said Madame Czecca, "you are not the less handsome; and perhaps it is some unfortunate person whom you can assist."

The last argument prevailed. Madame Czecca left the room, and the stranger was shown in.

He was a tall figure, in Armenian costume. His grey beard flowed down to his girdle; his large sparkling eyes were ardent and expressive. For a few moments he stood in silent contemplation of the Countess; and only on her repeated inquiry of the motive of his visit, did he seem to collect his thoughts; and then, in a somewhat unconnected manner, explained his errand.

"I am a merchant from Charkow," he said, "and my life is entirely engrossed by my business and my family. Beyond those, I have only one passion, namely, for music and song. The great fame which the Countess formerly enjoyed in the artistical world, reached even to our remote town, and my most ardent wish has ever been to have one opportunity of hearing and admiring her. Your retirement from the stage seemed to have frustrated this wish for ever, when suddenly we learned that, out of gratitude to your former teacher, you had resolved once more to appear before the public, and sing at her concert. Unable to resist my desire to hear you, I left business, wife, and children, and hastened hither. I

arrived yesterday, and had no sooner alighted than I sent for tickets. It was in vain ; at no price was one to be obtained. Countess, I *cannot* return home without hearing you. You are so good : yesterday, for love of a friend, you sang in public ; make an old man happy, and rejoice his heart with half a verse of a song ; I shall then have heard you, and shall not have made this long journey in vain."

As the dewdrops of night are absorbed by the bright rays of the morning sun, so did the last traces of tears disappear from the smiling countenance of the charming woman. With that amiable grace which is peculiarly her own, she drew an arm-chair near the piano for the old man, and seating herself at the instrument, abandoned herself to the inspirations of her genius. Her rosy fingers flew over the keys,—the prelude echoed through the spacious saloon ; the Countess had disappeared—Henrietta Sontag was herself again ; or, rather, she was Desdemona in person.

The song was at an end : the musician, transported for the moment into higher regions, returned gradually to earth, and to consciousness. She looked round at her *audience*. The old Armenian was upon his knees beside her, pressing the folds of her dress to his brow. After the pause which followed the song, he raised his countenance ; its expression was of indescribable delight—mingled, however, with a trace of sadness. He would have risen, would have spoken ; but could not. The singer's little hand came to his assistance. He pressed it convulsively to his lips, rose to his feet, and, in so doing, slipped a costly diamond ring from his finger to hers. Then he tottered to the door. There he stopped, turned round, and fixing a long and penetrating gaze upon the singer. "Alas !" he exclaimed, in tones of deepest melancholy, "how great the pity !" And, with the last word upon his lips, he disappeared.

Henrietta Sontag returned to her piano : she would have continued singing, but her voice failed her. Deeply affected, she rested her head upon the music-stand, and, in mournful accents, repeated the Armenian's words. "Yes," she said, aloud, "the pity is great indeed." And, sadly pondering, she sank upon the sofa.*

* Years after these lines were first published, news reached us of the brilliant triumph which, in London, had been achieved by art over social prejudices. Genius had cast off the cramping fetters of *convenance*. Henrietta

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCERTS.

ALTHOUGH I have already described the various public amusements of St. Petersburg, I now return to the subject, in order to supply ampler details of one of the most prominent and popular amongst them, namely, concerts. During the greater part of the year these are completely tabooed. Throughout the whole winter concerts are things almost unheard of, until Lent arrives. During the seven weeks' fast their reign continues—a reign which is absolute in proportion to its brevity. The Petersburgers so gorge themselves at the musical banquet, that they are sick of concerts for the rest of the year. When Lent comes, the theatres are closed, dancing-music is forbidden, and concerts have undisputed possession of the field. There are often half-a-dozen in a day. They begin at noon and last till an advanced hour of the night. Everybody goes to them every day, and often to two or three in one day. In spite of their seeming excess, they are always more or less well attended. This is partly accounted for by the circumstance that, at the season in question, a perfect army of virtuosi from all parts of Europe throng to the Russian capital. These professors usually make their appearance there a few weeks before Lent, provided with recommendations to the principal dilettanti, get introduced into musical circles, where they give proof of their talents, and so win patronage preparatory to their public performances. The saloons of Counts Wilhorsky and Lwoff afford them abundant opportunities for this, and a musician of real talent may be sure by this means of obtaining at St. Petersburg due appreciation and success.

Mere ordinary success, however, is no success at all in the Russian capital. The delicate considerateness of the more distinguished portion of the public, leads them to applaud even mediocrity, which, however, is again forgotten before they visit the next concert. But to obtain a real success, to cause a sensation, is difficult in St.

Sontag was again enchanting the public. Let Germany be proud of its daughter.—*Note by the German Editor.*

Petersburg, and only to be achieved by talent of the very first order. The Countess Rossi had a triumph of this kind, but we cannot estimate her success by the usual scale applied to professional performers; the circle in which she moved separated her from that class, and it would have been difficult for the keenest observer to determine the exact degree of influence which the *Countess* exercised upon the *singer*. Presently another musical celebrity appeared at the horizon. In January, 1842, the cry, "He comes!" suddenly resounded through St. Petersburg. Nobody asked, "Who comes?" The pronoun was sufficiently significant; all knew whom to expect. The whole city waited in excited anticipation. The mode of reception had its difficulties. Should the whole of the musicians in St. Petersburg go out in a body to meet him? This was the first idea. But would not the Dorpat University oppose this? He was a graduate. And would not the army put in its claim? For the hero of the piano was also a man of the sword; and had received a sabre of honour as a gift from his countrymen, the Magyars, and had pledged himself, when returning thanks for it, to draw, in the day of need, for the freedom of Hungary. Finally, the youth of St. Petersburg would not be behindhand with that of Berlin, and 2000 young men volunteered to form relays and draw his carriage from Narva to the capital. Count Wilhorsky sent a courier to meet him, and to offer him quarters at his hotel, but the virtuoso declined, deprecated any ceremonious reception, and excused himself by declaring his addiction to seclusion and to the society of the Muse. An express came to engage apartments for him at the Hôtel Coulon; for three whole days the streets leading to it were blocked up by the concourse of people. At last the sound of a post-horn was heard; its melodious notes were surely blown by the postilion who drove Liszt. The four horses rattled round the corner of the Newsky, and were pulled up in front of the Hôtel Coulon. A servant sprang from the box and pulled down the steps; a young man stepped, smiling, out of the carriage; his fur cloak concealed his features, but the long hair that waved over his shoulders, and the long fingers that protruded from his sleeves, betrayed his identity. "It is he!" was the cry that resounded through the streets, along the Newsky to the Morskoy, and as far as the Admiralty. Aristocratic equip-

ages come rolling up, the fashionable world begins to crowd the antechamber, but speedily again evacuate it with long faces, and disappointed mien. It was not the great man; it was only Signor Pantaleone, Liszt's good secretary and bad singer, who had come on in front, as quartermaster, to take up the apartments and play St. Petersburg a little trick. The modest artist made his quiet entrance after midnight in another carriage and four, attended by his agent, valet-de-chambre, servant, and chasseur.

The day of days arrived. Liszt gave his first concert at the Nobles' Club. The Emperor, the whole Court, the highest nobility, all the artistical notabilities of the capital, a select circle of ladies, adorned the room, every nook and corner of which was crowded. The receipts amounted to 20,000 rubles banco, and the delight and applause were equivalent to twenty times as much. Liszt passes for a genius, and, by all the Muses! a genius he is; but the great public cannot appreciate him at his full value, which is not ascertainable at the price of a ticket. To know what Liszt's genius really is, to appreciate it in its full and true extent, one must have the opportunity I have enjoyed of hearing him without seeming to listen —sitting in a sofa-corner in his room, helping one's self out of his travelling cigar store, and turning over the leaves of a newspaper, whilst Liszt, heedless of the barbarian who can read the "Débats" whilst he plays, gives himself up to his inspirations, plays without affectation or coquetry, plunges into an ocean of sounds expressive of every gradation of the passions, and seems alternately to soar upon celestial wings, and to descend into the depths of an *inferno.* Then is Liszt magnificent, then is he sublime—then is he equal to his reputation. But before the public! no! then his better self struggles against his bad habits—conquering, but not completely mastering them. Would that Liszt could follow the advice which Herder somewhere gives to actors,—"to forget that they are before the public." Could Liszt attain to this degree of self-control, the public would recognise his genius as I recognised it, and their admiration would be immeasurably purer and more profound.

Liszt gave at least a dozen concerts during his stay at St. Petersburg; the enthusiasm was always the same, and his receipts were enormous; only the smaller portion of these, however, remain-

ed in his purse; with princely generosity, he loaded his friends and countrymen with presents of money and money's worth; his liberality and munificence were proverbial, and served not a little to heighten his fame. True it is that he is generous to an excess; but —truth before all things!—Liszt certainly throws away his money by handfuls, but (without disparagement to his generosity) he throws it, in preference, *where it is likely to jingle.* To do good by stealth is less in his way.

Covered with laurels, the great pianist left St. Petersburg. His name and fame would have remained indelibly impressed on the minds of the living generation—if he had never returned thither. Better had it been for his reputation had he played a sonata of Beethoven's the less, and applied the time thus economised to the perusal of an old German comedy. Amongst much rubbish, such old plays sometimes contain valuable truths. One of these is spoken by the gipsy beldam in *Preziosa*, when she says,—

> "Wird man wo gut aufgenommen
> Soll man ja nicht wiederkommen."*

The proverb holds good all the world over, but nowhere so much so as in St. Petersburg. That capital is a perfect shark in the matter of devouring reputations. Its applause resembles its seasons; in a single night one passes from summer's ardent heat to winter's icy cold, and a snow shroud covers the meadows which yesterday bloomed in the sunbeams. The Russian lives fast, and as he uses his life quickly, so he uses all things quickly which cheer and embellish existence.

A year after his first visit, Liszt returned to St. Petersburg. His genius had been true to him in the interval; his artistic skill was, if anything, still more perfect than the year before; in no respect had he fallen off, and yet, for some inexplicable reason, the public cared not for him. *Ce n'était qu'un artiste de plus.*

* "When once one has been well received in a place, it is wise not to return thither."

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONSPIRACIES.

WHEN concerts end, the season is also ended, for Lent has set in. It is usually at about this period that the boom of cannon from the fortress announces the breaking up of the Neva. Ice and furs disappear together, and summer begins. The thaw of the Neva is attended by a ceremony, whose hero is the governor of the fortress. The first boat that traverses the liberated stream bears him from the city to the Winter Palace, where he presents a goblet of Neva water to the Emperor. The Emperor drinks, has the goblet emptied, and returns it, full to the brim with gold pieces, to the governor. This was for years the custom; but it was found that every year the goblet grew larger. At last the Emperor, reckoning that in this manner his treasury would be exhausted before the Neva was, fixed a maximum sum as the contents of the goblet, without reference to its capacity. The amount is still sufficient to be gratifying to the governor, who re-embarks and returns well pleased to his fortress.

Besides its fortifications, the citadel has three things worthy of examination. The first of these is the burial vault of the Czars, in the church of the fortress, where great stone monuments indicate the spots beneath which, deep in the earth, repose the mortal remains of the autocrats of all the Russias. The tombs have green velvet covers, trimmed with ermine, and having embroidered upon them, in gold, the names of the deceased. The two other remarkable things can be seen only on the outside. With one of them melancholy associations are connected; it is the casemate in which the state prisoners are confined: the other awakens less painful ideas; it is the vaults containing the state treasure.

In these vast cellars are deposited, in gold and silver bars, the full value of all the state paper current in the empire. A provision which renders completely idle any hope that might be entertained of stirring up a revolution in Russia by means of a national bankruptcy.

The notions entertained in Germany with respect to impending

disturbances in Russia, and of revolutions that may daily be expected to break out there, cannot but appear ridiculous to those who have had opportunities of becoming acquainted with the country. The most powerful lever and support of modern revolutions, a state of public opinion dangerous to the existing government, is there totally wanting, for in Russia the public feeling is anything but revolutionary. The great mass of the nation is *religious* and *moral*. There exist not two greater extinguishers of every revolutionary element. In Russia only two sorts of conspiracies are possible, *palace conspiracies*, and *military insurrections*. A revolution, in the German sense of the word, could be accomplished only by favour and under cover of one of these two disturbing powers. History furnishes us with examples of the former kind; the latter we have witnessed in our own times.

There was certainly some ground for alarm in the temper of the great masses of the population of St. Petersburg in the year 1831, but it was not of a political character. The cholera, breaking out with violence, had swept away its victims with startling rapidity, and absurd rumours of poisonings—rumours whose terrible effect, even upon the far more enlightened French people, I myself have had opportunities of observing—misled the populace of St. Petersburg, and hurried them into dangerous excesses. Firmly impressed with the conviction that the physicians procured the death of the sick, an excited mob one morning stormed a cholera hospital on the Haymarket, hunted down the physicians, and precipitated one of them from a third floor window upon the pavement. That was the signal for a general insurrection; the immense Haymarket was soon crowded with a dense throng, from which issued murmurs as menacing as the roll of distant thunder. A heavy and threatening cloud seemed to hang over the anxious city. Suddenly the Emperor appeared, fresh from Moscow, whither he had been on account of the cholera. Seated in an open calêche, with only Count Orloff at his side, he drove into the square. Soon the advance of the horses was impeded, and the shouting and tumultuous mob pressed round the carriage. In vain did the Emperor endeavour to appease those nearest to him; every minute the tumult increased, and already threatening words were accompanied by threatening gestures. The Em-

peror rose to his feet, and, exerting his utmost power of voice, commanded silence from the riotous mob, over whose heads he towered, like some angry demigod, flashing amongst them the lightnings of his eye, and, by his imposing presence and tone, stilling the uproar and obtaining a hearing. "Wretches!" he exclaimed, "is this the reward of all my toil and care for your welfare, this your gratitude for the vigils and labours by which I have striven to make men of you? Is this the gratitude you show me, when my anxiety on your behalf has again brought me amongst you? Have I not cares enough upon my head, that, with childish thanklessness, you thus add to my burthen? In insurgent Poland civil war mows down our brethren; in the heart of the kingdom pestilence carries them off in numbers; and here, where it already begins to seize its victims, you annihilate the means of your salvation, and sin against your fellow-citizens and against the authorities that God has set over you!" As he spoke, the church clocks commenced tolling. "Hear the call to prayers!" continued the Czar in inspired tones, "the Almighty looks down upon you! implore his pardon for your madness! On your knees! wretched people; on your knees!" And 10,000 raging barbarians fell upon their knees, crossed themselves, and peaceably separated.

This is only one of a hundred proofs of the Emperor's great personal courage. One of the most striking occurred immediately after his accession to the throne.

The revolution of 1825 is universally known; the judicial proceedings it gave rise to were printed both in Russia and in Germany; nevertheless, some of its details will be new to many in the latter country.

A widely-spread conspiracy had extended itself, like a network, over the whole of Russia. Well knowing that, without the co-operation of the army, a revolution was impossible, the conspirators watched a favourable opportunity of winning it over, and had fixed their revolt to take place at the death of the Emperor Alexander. Alexander, a man in the prime of life, and apparently in perfect health, seemed likely to live long enough to give them ample time for preparation, when suddenly they were startled by his unexpected death, which threatened to render all their plans abortive. The cir-

cumstances I have here mentioned, are the most conclusive refutation of the silly rumour that was spread of Alexander having been murdered at Taganrog. Had his death been the work of those conspirators, they would assuredly have chosen their time better.

Instead of this, the Emperor's demise astonished and disconcerted the plotters. Those of their number who were in St. Petersburg when it occurred, found themselves in the greatest perplexity; to break into open revolt, unprepared as they were, was too great a risk. But it was scarcely less dangerous to allow Constantine time to consolidate his power. Of the two evils they chose that which seemed the least; they resolved to temporize, and to await a favourable pretext for insurrection; a pretext which they doubted not that the wild choleric character of the new Czar would ere long afford them. Meanwhile they would accelerate with redoubled zeal their preparations for the insurrection. But a great surprise was in reserve for them. Suddenly there arrived at St. Petersburg a courier from Warsaw, bringing the new Emperor's abdication. The Viceroy of Poland, Grand-duke Constantine—to whom his younger brother Nicholas had sworn allegiance in St. Petersburg, and had received for him the oaths of the army and the people—wrote to tender his allegiance to his junior, informing him that he had already received for him the oaths of the troops in Warsaw, and referred him to an act in the archives of the senate, which contained his renunciation of the crown, made with the assent of the Emperor Alexander.

This unlooked-for event was the spark to the powder-barrel. The character of Nicholas had been evident even in his youth; from *him* no hasty or imprudent act, such as might seem to justify rebellion, was to be expected; from *him* there was no hope of wrenching the reins of government if once he got them firmly in his grasp. What then was to be done must therefore be done at once, or at once abandoned. In all haste the troops of the garrison were tampered with; an appeal was made to their fidelity to the hereditary Czar, to whom they had already sworn allegiance; the Emperor Constantine was represented to them as pining in chains in a dungeon at Warsaw; Nicholas was depicted as a usurper, striding to the throne over the body of his brother and rightful

sovereign. In order, at the same time, to animate and sustain the democratic flame which the conspirators had striven to kindle in the minds of the people, the watchword given to the troops was, *Vivat Constantine! Vivat Constitutio!* This puzzled the simple warriors of Russia, and they innocently asked who this *Constitutio* was, for whom they were to rise. The reply, worthy of the conspirators, was, *The Wife of Constantine!* This satisfied the deluded soldiers, who forthwith turned out in marching order, loaded their muskets with ball cartridge, and proceeded, in interminable columns, to the Isaac Square, heartily shouting—in the full conviction that they were faithfully doing their duty—*Vivat Constitutio!*

Whilst this occurred, the new Emperor was sitting, unsuspicious of evil, in the midst of his family circle, when suddenly Milorado-witsch, pale as death, burst into the apartment.

"Treason! Sire!" he exclaimed. "A military conspiracy! The whole garrison is under arms!"

The Empress gave a convulsive start, and could not utter a word. For a moment Nicholas himself sat silent; then the Emperor rose calm and self-possessed to his feet, and his throne was saved. The boudoir of the Empress was rapidly filling with aide-de-camps.

"To my brother Michael!" said the Emperor to one of them "To the Preobrescenzky barracks," he added to another, "to see if the guards of Peter the Great will uphold his throne."

The aide-de-camps flew in every direction. The Czar stepped quietly to the Empress, who seemed petrified; silently embracing her, he took the heir to the crown from her lap, and carried him down stairs into the courtyard of the Winter Palace. The guard was drawn up under arms. With his son in his arms, the Emperor walked up to them.

"Soldiers!" he cried, "a horde of impious men are guilty of mutiny and rebellion. If you are of them, fire! murder me and the heir to the throne; we are in your power!"

A tremendous "Long live the Czar!" was the reply of the veterans.

"Well then," said Nicholas, throwing the boy to them, "Protect the *Naslednik!* Let him be your emperor, if I fall!"

And with the word, he sprang upon his horse and gallopped,

followed by Miloradowitsch and a few aide-de-camps, across the Admiralty Square to meet the insurgent soldiery.

The tumult was terrible. The rebels had taken up a position in front of the Senate House, between the Isaac's Church and the English Quay. From all sides reinforcements of misguided troops flocked to join them. The square was thronged with people; in the midst of them, on horseback, sat the intrepid young Emperor, with a few trusty adherents. Suddenly an officer galloped out from amongst the insurgents, his right hand thrust into the breast of his uniform; the Emperor's suite pressed round their sovereign. Nicholas rode quietly to meet the officer, and when at sword's length from him, "What do you bring me?" he said. The officer met the Emperor's steady gaze; his hand moved under his uniform; for an instant he hesitated; then, without replying a word, without saluting, he hurriedly wheeled his horse and galloped back to his friends. "He looked me in the face!" he cried, "and I could not kill him!"

Meanwhile the soldiers, of all arms, who had remained faithful, assemble round the Emperor. Their numbers rapidly increase. The insurgents range themselves in order of battle, but dare not attack. Suddenly, out of the great Morskoje, debouches, on foot, in double quick time, his drawn sword gleaming in his hand, the Grand-duke Michael; behind him, at the same hurried pace, the iron grenadier column of the Preobrescenzky guards, which he has been to fetch at their barracks. Then, at full speed, up comes a battery of horse artillery, and stations itself by the side of the chivalrous Emperor. Nicholas sends an aide-de-camp to the Winter Palace with the message that he is "still alive," and then parleys commence. These naturally led to nothing, for all that the insurgents desired was to gain time, and to avoid anything decisive until night came on, under cover of which they expected to spread disorder through the whole city. Skirmishing began: on both sides a few victims fell. It was a dull December day; the time was three in the afternoon, and mist and darkness began already to cover the capital. In vain did those around the Emperor implore him to order an attack; in vain did the Grand-duke Michael represent to him that, when darkness once set in, a regular conflict would be impossible, and that murder and incendiarism would reign throughout the city. The Emperor still

hesitated. "I will spare the blood of my people," he said, "for if once a cannon is fired, they must fall to the last man." With lighted fuses the gunners stood beside their pieces; the infantry had their muskets cocked, the cavalry their sabres drawn; the silence of death reigned amongst the little troop, every eye was fixed upon the Emperor, who had stationed himself to the front, environed by his staff, right opposite to the foe. Suddenly, in the foremost rank, a general fell from his horse, mortally wounded. "Is it the Emperor?" resounded through the ranks. No! it was the noble Miloradowitsch, who had met, close by his sovereign's side, the glorious death of loyalty and self-devotion. Then a young lieutenant of artillery snatched the burning fuse from a gunner's hand, applied it to the touch-hole of a cannon, and the piece vomited its destructive contents into the ranks of the rebels. Was the shot fired by command, or on the mere impulse of the young officer? In the confusion of the time that point was never cleared up. Enough, that a truly patriotic heart guided the hand which fired that gun—the signal of decisive action. Its report was followed by that of the whole battery; the Emperor commanded a charge; it was general; there was still enough daylight to distinguish friend from foe, when the routed insurgents, throwing away their arms, fled down the quay, and across the frozen Neva, which protected them from the pursuit of the cavalry. On they ran towards Wasili-Ostrow, pursued by the roar of the artillery.

In hundreds were the rebels captured; in hundreds did their bodies strew the scene of action and the ice of the Neva. The throne was saved; the conspiracy, which aimed at nothing less than the extermination of the family of Romanoff, and the republicanizing of Russia—of *Russia*, I say—was crushed by one bold blow. The Emperor threw himself on the body of Miloradowitsch, in deep grief at his loss. Then, after closing his faithful follower's eyes, he returned to the Winter Palace, where the still-trembling Empress met him at the entrance of her apartments. Silently he pressed her to his breast; then gazing mournfully at her, with pallid countenance and half-suppressed voice, "And thus," he said, "commences our reign!"

"Yes, it was a bloody commencement, and blood stained the

first footsteps of the noblest prince, the plainest citizen, the tenderest father, who ever was qualified, by his exalted virtues, his firmness of character, and his comprehensive mind, to occupy, with honour to himself, and benefit to his people, the lofty station to which Providence had called him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE IMPERIAL FAMILY.

DURING a short stay at Peterhof, I saw the whole of the imperial family. They had just returned from a drive. The crown prince drove his wife in a carriage and pair, and the Prince of Leutchtenberg sat behind them. My attention was particularly attracted to the princess; for this was the first time I had seen her since her marriage. As the prince's destined brided, I had seen her during his stay at Darmstadt. At that time she was extremely young, and was rather to be called thin than slender; she was pale, and had a suffering, sickly appearance. Now she was full in person, blooming, and really a very fine woman. To see her and her sister-in-law, the Princess of Leutchenberg, also a lovely young woman, by the side of the empress, in whose imposing bearing and appearance there seems personified the idea of imperial greatness, one could not help thinking that the consciousness of such exalted station had an actual influence on the external aspect of the persons occupying it. Nature, who has been bountiful to the princess in respect of personal attractions, has also, it is said, richly endowed her mind. People say that she is both sensible and witty, and tell numerous pleasing anecdotes in support of the assertion. Thus it is related that once, at a game of forfeits, in hopes of embarrassing her, she was ordered to give a bouquet and a kiss to the person, there present, whom she best loved. Without hesitation she approached the Emperor, bent her knee, and offered him the flowers.

"In the presence of an Emperor," she said, "and of such an Emperor, love and admiration can take but one direction!"

The Emperor lifted her up, kissed her forehead, and said, with that smile which so well becomes him: "You are my good and prudent child."

Before her marriage she is said to have been very shy, and to have appeared unembarrassed only with Count Orloff, whom she had known at Darmstadt, whither he had accompanied the Prince. Orloff, emboldened by this, sometimes permitted himself little jests with her; and, amongst others, he is reported to have asked her, the day after her marriage, "*Si elle éprouvait tout le changement de sa condition?*" to which she, drawing herself up with dignity, replied: "Undoubtedly, Sir! Yesterday I was a young girl of little importance, and to-day I am the future Empress of all the Russias!" How far this anecdote is true, I cannot decide; but if I am inclined to doubt that the Count would have ventured so familiar a question, on the other hand I have no doubt, from all I have heard of her, that the Princess has abundant energy and dignity to make the reply attributed to her.

I rambled all over Peterhof and its delightful grounds, which had their origin in the Emperor's excellent taste, and in his affection for his family. First I visited Zarizin-Ostrow (The Empress's Island), where I saw long walks draped with thick ivy. This evergreen plant, which is unable to brave the severity of a northern winter, here flourishes the year round; for when the severe season sets in, these walks are covered with glass, and heated like conservatories. Next, I repaired to "Palermo" and to "Kreut," charming summer-houses, built and thus named in grateful remembrance of the places where the Empress regained her health. Then I went to "Chalais," opposite to which, on a little hillock, hard by the fish-pond, stands an arbour of cast-iron, with a light roof, beneath which stands a bronze bust of the Empress, of striking resemblance, the inscription beneath which, "To the Happiness of my Life," is in the Russian language—probably because the Emperor had here greater confidence in the intelligence of his subjects than in that of strangers. But not only in stone and in iron is the Emperor's tender affection for his wife recorded. In "Selski-Domik" (rustic cottage) they showed me the coat of the veteran who had undertaken the care of this little house; the left sleeve bore the tokens of more

than twenty years' service, and a medal indicated that he had shared in the campaigns against the Turks in 1828–29. But the man's wish to pass the rest of his days there was not to be fulfilled. The Empress drove up, and the veteran received her to conduct her into her house. He lifted her out of the carriage and bowed himself to kiss the hem of her robe. When he again stood erect, the illustrious lady sank, deeply moved, upon his breast, and repaid the chivalrous service with a tender kiss. "It is yet too soon," she said, with tearful eyes, "for you to devote yourself to my service alone; our country has not yet pensioned you off, and has still need of your services."*

This expression was but a repetition of the Emperor's own definition of his social position. He considers himself as the first servant of the State, and likes to make those around him observe this. If a party of pleasure be proposed, he "will join it if duty permits." To a favoured, but weary, official, who asked to retire on a pension, he replied, "*So long as I serve*, you, also, I hope will not refuse your services to your country." The days he passes in his country palace at Peterhof are his time of relaxation from this "duty" or "service." Every hour of them is spent in the bosom of his family. Invested with crown and sceptre, he inspires respect and admiration;—behold him in his domestic circle, and one cannot help loving him. There is something elevating in his joy at the growth and development of his children and grandchildren. Equally touching is his melanchoy remembrance of those too early snatched away. As an example of this, we need but repair to the palace of Sarskojé-Selo, and enter the apartments of the deceased Grand-duchess Alexandra. The chamber in which she sank into the sleep that shall know no earthly waking, is still in precisely the same state as at that sad moment: no hand is suffered to profane

* Mr. Jermann is not always very lucid in his mode of expression, and there is vagueness and obscurity in the preceding passage. I have not been able to satisfy myself whether the veteran here referred to is, or is not, intended to be the Emperor Nicholas himself. The distinction and tenderness of the caress bestowed by the Empress in some degree favonr the supposition, which the verbal construction of the passage does not in all respects confirm. The translation being here strictly literal, the reader can judge for himself of the meaning intended to be conveyed.—T.

by its touch any object that belonged to her. The next room has been consecrated as a chapel of the Greek Church, and in it is placed her portrait, painted in oils by Brüllow, and adorned with a little imperial crown and an ermine mantle. The sweet and youthful countenance is turned heavenwards, with a more fervent expression than may be customary at that early and joyous period of life, but which is rendered natural and appropriate by the consciousness of approaching dissolution. Below the sufferer is seen an angel, whose lovely face wears a sublime and saddened look. He seems on the point of bearing his beautiful burthen to heaven.

The Grand-duchess is buried in the imperial vault of the Romanoffs, in he citadel-church of St. Peter and St. Paul. In a secluded spot of the palace-garden paternal love has erected a touch ing tribute to her memory. As a young girl, she loved to sit for hours on the bank of the ornamental water, beside a birchen summer-house, and to feed six beautiful white swans. Hard by this hut has been built a simple niche, in which stands her statue in marble, the size of life, bearing in its arms her infant, which perished almost as soon as born. The pedestal of the statue is covered with appropriate passages of Scripture. After her death, the white swans were conveyed to another piece of water, and six black ones took their place. But the original occupants would not be thus driven away. As often as it was tried to settle them in another place, so often did they return, in the very first night, to the favourite resort of their departed mistress. In the little summer-house hangs a portrait of the lamented princess, and beneath it is inscribed a sentence which in her lifetime was frequently upon her lips; "I well know, dear father, that you have no greater pleasnre than to render my mother happy." May this testimony, thus borne by the dead, be a living guarantee for the *heart* of the man, the necessary severity of whose arduous "duty" has so often caused him to be misrepresented by prejudice and party hatred as unfeeling and cruel. May it be taken in conjunction with that of an humble observer, who has often seen the Emperor of all the Russias escape at early morn from the pressure of many affairs, and repair to the silent spot where mournful memories abound, there to kneel before the likeness of his beloved daughter, and to supplicate

the Most High for strength and courage; and then, in placid resignation, to seat himself upon the grass, where his child had often sat for hours together—and there, as she was wont to do, to feed the swans she so dearly loved.

The heart of a despotic sovereign must not be read in bulletins, or in sentences of banishment and death, where often only speaks the imperious voice of stern necessity and duty. The heart of an autocrat should be judged of in his family circle; there is the character of Nicholas to be appreciated in its most genial and amiable point of view.

At Peterhof I often met the Emperor walking alone in the park and gardens. There he puts himself at his ease; lays aside sword, uniform, and epaulets, and rambles about in a surtout and forage-cap. But in his capital, where he is "on duty," he never appears otherwise than in uniform; even in the coldest weather he wears only a cloth cloak, like any other officer. I never saw him in a fur coat, nor do I believe that he has one. In the metropolis his appearance is quite unassuming; he walks about the Newsky unattended, and his presence is only to be noticed by the joyful movement of the crowd. None are allowed to address him; and although it were most agreeable to him if he could with propriety be left unnoticed, yet he exacts due respect from those by whom he knows that he is recognised. He once stopped opposite to two young men belonging to one of the imperial schools, who were staring him in the face, and asked why they did not salute him. One of them maintained a terrified silence; the other plucked up courage, and replied, "We do not know you!"

"No matter," replied the Emperor; "you see that I wear a general's uniform. Go, both of you, to the Winter Palace, and report yourselves to the guard as under arrest. There you will find out who I am, and will know it for the future."

With throbbing hearts the young men obeyed orders, and augured little good from the unfriendly reception of the officer on guard. The guard had their dinner; nobody heeded the prisoners Several hours passed, still they were kept fasting. They had just received a harsh refusal to their humble petition to be allowed to send out for a loaf, when one of the imperial servants entered with

a dinner from the Emperor's table, and a bottle of champagne. For that day, he told them, they were the guests of the Emperor, who requested them to drink his health, and not to forget in future to salute when they met him, as he could not afford to invite them to dinner every day.

On another occasion the Emperor met Vernet, the favourite actor at the French theatre, in the street, and stopped to speak to him. A group of persons quickly formed itself, and no sooner had the Emperor walked on again than the police—of whose customarily literal interpretation of the laws I have had already occasion to give examples when mentioning the thaw of the Neva and the burning of Lehmann's theatre—came up and took Vernet to the nearest guardhouse for having spoken to the Emperor. Vernet needed but to write a line to the director of the theatre to clear up the mistake, and obtain his release; but he delaying doing this, missed his rehearsal, and waited till the evening's performance began before he informed General Gedeonoff of his mishap. Of course a carriage was immediately sent to fetch him to the theatre, where he was to perform in the second piece. On his arrival there the General bitterly reproached him for having carried the joke so far, for having missed a rehearsal, and probably caused a delay in the performance; he informed him at the same time that he was fined a week's salary.

Vernet said nothing, but began very deliberately to dress. When it was time for the second piece to begin, Vernet was not ready. The Imperial family were amongst the spectators; the public grew restless. Vernet was not yet dressed. The manager went to hurry him; Vernet, seemingly absorbed in thought, merely replied, with perfect coolness, "That costs me three hundred francs!" Next came the government inspector, and urged him to haste. "Three hundred francs!" was the sole reply he obtained. Finally, General Gedeonoff himself came to hurry the tardy actor, overwhelmed him with reproaches, entreated, swore, stamped with his feet, cursed in all sorts of languages. Vernet would not be put out of his way, but continued quietly to lay on his rouge, stepped back a pace to study the effect, then returned to the glass and touched up the paint, looking all the while straight before him. Ready at last, he hurried past the General to the door of his dressing-room; there,

turning suddenly round, "Excellency," said he, "do you know that costs me three hundred francs?"

When Vernet stepped upon the stage, he was received with murmurs. But he was not the man to be disconcerted by them, and he acted with more spirit and humour than ever. The Emperor laughed immoderately, and, knowing nothing of what had occurred—that having been carefully concealed from him—he wished to console his favourite for his bad reception, went behind the scenes between the acts, spoke to him in the most friendly manner, and asked him if he could not do him a pleasure in return for all the amusement he had afforded him. "Sire," replied the actor, "the greatest favour you can do me is never to accost me again in the street." The Emperor looked astonished; Gedeonoff changed colour. Vernet proceeded to relate, in humorous strain, his adventure with the police, and concluded by pointing to the General, and saying, "Sire, to complete my misfortune, I am fined three hundred francs." The Emperor, convulsed with laughter, hurried back to his box to tell the story to the Empress, and next day Vernet received the receipt for the fine, paid out of the imperial purse, and, in his Majesty's name, a costly diamond ring as *dommages intérêts*.

On my way back from Peterhof, I met the whole Imperial family together, rambling in the shady walks of the park. The Emperor was walking arm in arm with the Archduke Michael, who has since then been prematurely snatched away—far too soon for the interests of his country and of humanity. The Empress and the Duchess of Leuchtenberg were driving in a jaunting car; all the others were on foot. Whenever they met a child, the Archduke Michael would stop to pat its cheek, or stroke its head, and look kindly at it. This man, whom Providence so sorely tried by the loss of his own children, was a great lover of children. To add to their places of sport and recreation in damp St. Petersburg, he had a large open space in front of his palace enclosed in a handsome iron railing, laid down with grass and planted with trees, thus preparing for the rising generation a playground and place of assemblage which, after the Summer Garden, is the most spacious and the most popular in the whole capital.

Not only in matters of sport, but in the more earnest affairs of

life, was Michael's benevolence extended to youth, even when he reproved or punished. Of the amiable character of this prince, none can form a clear idea who have not enjoyed the advantage of living near him. A good husband, a good father, a thorough soldier, he was, above all, a kind-hearted man.

During a short absence of the archduke from St. Petersburg, disorders occurred in several of the Imperial schools. The young men organised an opposition to their teachers, hissed one of them, and got up all manner of tumult and disturbance. General Kleinmichael, who was at the head of several of these corps or schools, treated the thing as insurrection and high treason, took rigorous proceedings, sent several of the youths (as the public voice with the highest indignation proclaimed) to serve, with closely shorn hair, as private soldiers; sentenced others to clean the streets and break stone, and punished the remainder with the like exaggerated severity.

When the Archduke Michael returned, and the body of Generals went to pay their respects to him, he addressed one of them, to whom, during his absence, the superintendence of the schools under his charge had been intrusted. "Ha! is it you?" he said, "nice stories these I hear; something about rebellion and conspiracy! have you too had your young culprits' heads shaved, and sent them to break stones on the Moscow road?"

"Your Imperial Highness!" replied the worthy General, "I looked upon the affair as a childish transgression, and considered that for children the rod is the fitting punishment; I ordered that to be applied, and by such means hope to preserve from degradation those who are one day to serve the state."

The Archduke clapped the General on the shoulder—"Bravely done, comrade!" he said, fixing at the same time a steadfast gaze on Kleinmichael. "Head-shaving is very well in its place, but one must not cut everything on the same pattern." Thereupon he went off to his schools and mustered the lads. The paleness of several countenances sufficiently pointed out to him the guilty. Passing smilingly through the ranks, and threatening them with his finger, "Take care! take care!" he said, and left the place without further reproof, followed, till far out of hearing, by the hurras and joyous acclamations of the whole school.

With the utmost strictness in matters of duty, the archduke combined a most feeling heart. The soldier trembled before him, as before a father, whose anger one dreads, but whose love one still more fears to lose. A father to the soldiers he truly was, and none of their petitions passed by his ear unheard. A thousand generous traits are current of him amongst the people. There are few needy officers of the garrison who have not stories to relate of his liberality and good offices; from not a few his princely magnanimity and munificence have averted a well-merited punishment. Thus was it that, late one evening, word was brought to him that an officer earnestly begged an audience of His Imperial Highness. The Grand Duke was busy, and refused to see him. The officer repeated his petition still more urgently, but with no better success. "Well," he then said, despairingly, to the aide-de-camp on duty, "inform his Imperial Highness that to-morrow I shall be a corpse; I cannot live dishonoured." The aide-de camp, who knew the officer personally, pressed for a disclosure of his position, and learned that the unhappy man, in an unguarded hour, had gambled away a considerable sum of regimental money confided to his charge. "Unfortunate man!" exclaimed the aide-de-camp, "you are lost! I see no way to save you!" But he felt sorry for the criminal, who was a brave officer, a good comrade, and the father of a numerous family. Plucking up courage, he for the third time presented himself before the Grand Duke.

"Am I to have no peace?" cried Michael, getting angry. "What is it now?"

"Your Imperial Highness," replied the aide-de-camp, "a man's life is at stake, the life of a brave officer, and of the father of a family." And he proceeded to explain the circumstances, representing them as favourably as he could, and entreating assistance for the defaulter, who otherwise had no resource but suicide, which he had resolved upon.

"He is right," replied the Grand Duke between his set teeth, and purple with anger. "You say he is a brave officer! On that account, then, I grant him an hour to send a bullet through his head; if he is alive at the end of that time, the provost-marshal knows his duty!"

With long strides the Grand Duke traversed the apartment once or twice, and then halted in front of the aide-de-camp.

"A nice state of things," he cried, "when those nearest to me ask compassion for such fellows. A nice example, truly."

"Your Imperial Highness," replied the aide-de-camp, "he has been guilty of a fault, but it is the first in his life. Send him to the Caucasus; there he will wash out the stain with his blood."

There was a pause. "What is his name?" the Grand Duke at last inquired. "But no, no," he added, "I will not know it; there, take the money; let him pay it back on the field of battle."

The St. Petersburg chronicle is also rich in humorous incidents and witty sayings attributed to the Grand Duke Michael. He was reputed the first *bon-mot* maker of that capital; unfortunately, Russian witticisms are difficult or impossible to translate. At the first levee he held after the festive reception given him in London, there were assembled in his saloons not only the whole body of officers, but also the chief notabilities in art and science. In brilliant full-dress uniform, adorned with stars, orders, and ribands, the crowd of generals paraded the apartments; whilst, in the recess of a bow window, Professor Struve, Director of the Observatory at Pulkowa, unassumingly waited, attired in a plain black coat. At last the doors flew open, and the Grand Duke entered, cordially saluting the assemblage. His eye singled out the retiring man in the bow window, and calling him, he spoke kindly to him, and said, how, in a far-off land, he had heard of his active and laborious researches, and how he meant soon to visit him at Pulkowa, where, perched upon his observatory, he had the advantage of being some fathoms nearer to heaven than other mortals. Struve, surprised and embarrassed by this unexpected notice, bowed low, and—assuredly far more confident on the pinnacle of his observatory than in the Grand Duke's palace—retreated, somewhat awkwardly, from the apartment. Scarcely had he disappeared, when he became the butt of all present; they wondered at the clumsiness of this book-man, who feared not to investigate God's handiwork, but who was awkward as any clown when he found himself in a distinguished circle. Michael, who overheard what was passing, smilingly interrupted the sneers. "You must show him indulgence, gentlemen," he said; "the great

astronomer was astounded at seeing so many stars *in the wrong places.*"

No more jokes were ever made at Professor Struve's expense in the reception-rooms of the Grand Duke Michael.

The Grand Duke is said to have been poor, his great income hardly sufficing to maintain his establishment properly. *He gave everything away.* It is well known that petitioners, when applying to be announced to him, never asked the officers on duty whether he was in a favourable mood, or in good or bad humour. Their only question was, "Is he in funds?" If the reply was in the affirmative, the supplicant felt sure beforehand of success.

Such was the Grand Duke Michael, and if there be anything else I should add fully to characterise him, it is comprised in the remark that he, of all the inhabitants of that vast empire, was the most faithful subject of his Imperial brother.

CHAPTER XX.

JOSEPH IS DEAD, BUT PETER LIVES.

IT is impossible to take a step in St. Petersburg without being reminded of its great founder; without trampling, I may say, his memory under foot. You tread upon pavement—his work it is that you do not sink to the knee in a swamp. You inhabit a safe and convenient house: it is he who provided for the foundations. You worship God in edifices whose solemn grandeur awakens devotion: he it was at whose command arose pillared halls and arched dome. You furrow the Neva's waters with your swiftly-gliding skiff: by him was the safe and tranquil bed afforded to the riotous torrent. More than all this, in St. Petersburg you mingle and converse with men: he it was who made men of his Russian barbarians.

To awaken religious feelings there is no need, in St. Petersburg, of cathedral or of church, of processional pomp or sound of bells; is there anything more elevating, anything that more effectually inspires devotion, and proclaims the power of God upon earth, than the memory of a truly great man? Every stone in St. Petersburg re-

calls Peter the Great to your remembrance; it is *his citadel;* his genius is everywhere manifest in his manifold works. Where stands the Kasansky, the St. Peter's of the North—that gigantic edifice, that monstrous mass of stone—there, but a century and a half ago, was a bottomless swamp, into which whole forests were thrown, and disappeared in its depths. Where now frown the granite battlements of the fortress, fishes leaped and gasped, left behind upon the shore by the receding stream, after its annual overflow. Where Nicholas, aided by steam, now prosecutes his great works upon the Neva, the builders of St. Petersburg carried the earth for the ramparts *in their caps and aprons;* human means seemed all unequal to the gigantic undertaking, but the Divine Spirit, speaking through Peter, who was its instrument, said, "*Let Petersburg be!*"—and Petersburg *was.*

With the persevering diligence of a bee, the great Czar brought one grain of sand after another to the vast undertaking, and rested not till the turrets of his capital towered loftily towards the clouds. In the year 1714 he published a ukase, rendering it compulsory on every nobleman to have a house in St. Petersburg, whether he dwelt in it or not: to facilitate building, every large ship that entered the harbour was bound to bring with it thirty stones, every small one ten, every country waggon ten, and thus, by accumulating small things, he attained immense results. Truly Catherine's genius could have devised nothing more admirably appropriate than his magnificent statue, nor any more beautiful place wherein to set it up to the glorification of his fame than that where it stands—in the midst of his gigantic creation. His hand is stretched over the city as if invoking a blessing upon it, and he gazes straight before him upon the waters of that Neva upon which he imposed the burthen of his fleet. Beyond it he perceives those beautiful monuments of art which embellish Wasili-Ostrow, the noble quays, the Exchange with its wonderful colonnades, the sphynxes, the schools, the colleges, the custom-house: further to the east the citadel, the Petersburg shore, the beautiful bridges: all around him the senate house, the holy synod, the Isaac's Church, the Admiralty, the spacious streets, the very pavement—all his work, by him founded, carried out by his genius, which still lives in his descendants. Yes! Peter still

lives, his spirit still actively toils, as at that day when he personally superintended his work, with his own hand laid the foundation stone, and restlessly and unceasingly forwarded it to its present brilliant results and his own immortal fame. If it be true that man may continue to live in his works, then does Czar Peter still live in his empire.

An interesting contrast to this picture is afforded us by an Austrian legend, which a modern poet has told excellently well. On the death of Joseph II., the country's newly awakened hopes of better times, its wishes, its dreams of happiness, were all buried in the sovereign's grave. Mourning reigned throughout the broad plains of Austria, and all gazed sadly at the urn which enclosed the ashes of the adored ruler.

In the remote country districts, and especially in the mountains, the people would not be persuaded of the death of their beloved emperor. Their gratitude and affection would gladly have held him to be immortal. The belief in his existence spread abroad, and daily found new partizans. "The Emperor Joseph is still alive," said the people, "he has hidden himself somewhere, to watch, for awhile, how things go on without him. One of these days he will suddenly reappear, resume the government, and all will go on quicker and better than before." But one year after another fled by, and the Emperor did not show himself; until at last the hope of his return gradually died away, and with it the belief of his existence. Only a few of the most obstinate could not and would not believe that their Emperor Joseph was dead, and strove against the naked truth with all the power their heart and imagination could supply.

Thus it was that, on a certain evening, a party of peasants, who sat drinking and smoking round the blazing fire of a village tavern in Styria, discoursed on their favourite topic. "Say what you please," at last exclaimed an old peasant, the mayor of the village, "I will stake my existence that Emperor Joseph is still alive, he cannot and shall not be dead—and dead he is not." As he spoke, a posthorn was heard without. A carriage drove up, and whilst the horses were watered, the traveller entered the tavern, seated himself by the fire, and chatted with the boors, telling them whence

he came, and what he had seen by the way. He had come a far journey, had been in Bohemia and Hungary, and now came direct from Vienna; and he told how, throughout the empire, the old state of things was returning: how the nobles were relapsing into luxury, and the army into insolence; how the police were again so busy, and their spies so sly and cunning, the excise officers so intrusive, the *employés* of the post so rude and brutal, and the officials to whom the censure of books and newspapers was confided, so indescribably stupid. Add to this that the priests were again stirring and busy, harassing their penitents' consciences and dipping into their purses, and making mischief as in former days. "I tell you, my good people," said the traveller, after detailing all this, "that things have never been as they now are; we hoped they would improve, but they grow daily worse; we have been allowed to draw breath for a moment, only, the next minute, to have the cord drawn tighter round our necks, and now we feel the want of air so much the more, for having once freely breathed it. No! believe me they are carrying things on worse than ever, and soon it will be beyond endurance."

Up stood the old village mayor, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and paid his reckoning. He seemed quite crest-fallen, pushed his cap a little over his left ear, and wished the company a mournful good-night. Then turning to his recent opponent in the argument, "Well!" he said, "since matters are thus, you may be right! I myself must now believe that *Emperor Joseph is dead indeed!*" And with a dejected air he left the tavern.

Emperor Joseph is dead! Yes, yes, he is indeed dead; how, otherwise, could all that his breath created, his hand built up, his genius animated, have thus sunk into decay, decay so utter that not a trace of his fabric is to be found? Yes, his work has perished; he is indeed *dead!*

But Peter's creation lives and flourishes in the full beauty of youth, in all the vigour of manhood, in inexhaustible generative power, which, fertilizing the century, produces one great work after another. Wherever you look, his genius meets you; whatever is now effected would not have been effected had he not lived, but is a development of his ideas, a carrying out of his projects, a comple-

tion of the temple of which he constructed the foundations. In that temple does his spirit continue to work for the good and welfare of his people, until they shall no longer need him. Then shall a new world arise over the grave of him who wrought out the present one; then, and then only, shall Russia in reality consign its creator to eternal rest, as Austria, unhappily, only too early interred hers. Until that day the history of the world unmistakeably declares that *Joseph is dead! but Peter lives!*

CHAPTER XXI.

PRINCE GAGARIN.

RETURNING one bright spring morning from the Newsky convent, I drove down the Perspective and was already close to the Anitschkow Bridge—which is adorned by those two beautiful statues of horses, casts of which embellish the gateway of the palace at Berlin—when I heard a shot fired. This was immediately followed by a crowding together of the numerous passengers who at that time always enliven the Newsky. I hurried to the bridge, and finding it impassable by reason of the throng, I jumped from the carriage and made my way on foot through the crush. With great difficulty I reached the house next to the bridge, which was a public building of some sort (I do not now exactly remember to what branch of the administration it belonged); in front of it stood a carriage with four horses, and close beside the vehicle, in the arms of his servants and some of the passers by, lay the noble and unfortunate Prince Gagarin, pierced by an assassin's bullet. Opposite to him stood a man of tall stature, with dark hair, attired in a shabby hunting suit. Gendarmes held him, and his fixed gaze was riveted upon his victim. A schasneprice, or police officer, held two pistols, one of which had been fired, whilst other police officials and budschnicks (street guardians), were exerting themselves to keep back the crowd, and to protect the murderer from their vengeful fury. The whole scene lasted but a moment, but it chilled me with

horror. The next minute the body was carried into the house; cavalry—whether a patrol or not, I do not know—trotted up with a close hackney coach, the murderer and two policemen got into it, and it drove down the Newsky, escorted by a few Cossacks. The remainder of the soldiers remained on guard at the house, and very soon cleared the street of the curious throng.

The event spread alarm throughout the city: Prince Gagarin murdered;—a terribly proud aristocrat, but of the noblest character; a strictly just man, a faithful subject of the Emperor, the best of fathers, and, with all his aristocratic haughtiness, a slave to his plighted word.

Where so many high qualities combine to cover human weaknesses, one may venture to lift the veil from these without risk of infringing upon the respect due to virtue, to misfortune, and to death.

Prince Gagarin was a perfect representative and type of the highest and most potent aristocracy of Russia. Their good and bad qualities were united in him in their utmost and extreme degree. In his high official position he was alike honoured and feared by his subordinates. The incorruptibility of his character; his justice; his generosity,—above all, his love of truth, and his inviolable observance of his word, had become proverbial. But towards him reverence could never expand into love; for a pride which bordered on insanity clouded his mind—otherwise so clear, acute, and cultivated.

Windischgrätz only aped Prince Gagarin when he declared that "mankind only commences at the rank of baron." The Austrian's silly words were acted up to by the Russian in equally absurd deeds. Amongst the numerous high court offices held by Prince Gagarin, was that of director-in-chief of the Imperial Theatre; and he fulfilled its duties, as he did all that devolved on him, with credit, and efficiently. But in spite of the respect which his person and actions inspired, the ridiculous features of his conduct could not escape the satire of the comedians. It was one of his conceits never to speak to an actor; and the actors, perceiving this, kept out of his way, and thus saved both him and themselves from embarrassment. Once, however, it happened that, during a performance at the German Theatre, a difference arose between the director, Von Helmersen, and a singer, named Holland—a difference which it was essential to the

interests of that evening's performance at once to reconcile. Helmersen made a complaint. Between the acts, the Prince sent for the singer and took him to task upon the stage in the presence of all the other performers. Holland, who is a very well-bred and well-informed man, defended himself in a becoming manner. But, when he had done speaking, the Prince turned to Helmersen and said, as though the other had spoken Chaldee, "Helmersen, what does he say?" And Baron Von Helmersen had to repeat the words of the plebeian Mr. Holland, in order to render them intelligible to the Prince. This done, the Prince replied, and again received Holland's answer through the medium of Baron Von Helmerson, who stood between them. But Holland, who thought this rather too strong, made a movement whilst the Prince spoke, which brought *him* into the centre place; and when it again came to him to answer, he turned and addressed himself to Helmersen, thus completely turning his back upon the Prince. The Prince could not stand this: he gave a laconic order, and left the stage. But from that day forward his tranquillity was at an end. He was the victim and prey of the mischievous dramatic community. The actors had noted his weaknesses, and well knew how to take advantage of them. Daily disputes arose: the most intimate friends had quarrels (real or feigned), which were prosecuted until an appeal to the Prince's decision became necessary—this being done merely to procure the bystanders the diversion of witnessing Von Helmersen exerting his talents as an interpreter. At last he would no longer refer anything whatever to the Prince, and so their fun was at an end.

A still more comical anecdote is related of Prince Gagarin, in his capacity of chief director of the theatres. In the "Tournament at Kronstein," Laufenheim, in order to pass for Starkenburg, has to put on the armour of the latter. Laufenheim's armour was black —Starkenburg's white. When they came to make the exchange, the white helmet proved to be too small, and there was no time to fetch another from the store, which was half a league off. So Laufenheim was told to wear his own helmet. But he thought it ridiculous to appear in a black helmet with white armour, and refused to do so. Time passed, the audience got impatient. Helmersen argued and expostulated in vain; and at last, the public dissatisfac-

tion becoming violent, he hurried to the Prince, and told him the circumstances. Down came the Prince full speed to the wardrobe, with Helmersen at his heels; and when the actor represented to him that it was quite ridiculous to expect he should put on a black helmet instead of a white one, the Prince so far forgot himself, in his zeal and impatience, that he actually replied to a player,—without an interpreter. Seizing the *black* helmet: "You are right," he said, "but this helmet is *white*. I find it so: look at it well again; is it not *white?*"

Utterly confounded by this extraordinary assertion, the disconcerted and puzzled actor found nothing better to say, than "Certainly, if such be your excellency's pleasure, the helmet *is white*—white as snow." And capping his white armour with the black helmet, he made his entrance, and the comedy proceeded.

As a contrast to these pettinesses, I will set down an estimable and characteristic trait of Prince Gagarin. He had appointed an actress's benefit for a certain Wednesday; but the occurrence of a great Court entertainment, fixed for the same day, seemed likely greatly to diminish the receipts. At the actress's request he put off the benefit for a week. But whilst arrangements were making for the performance, it was discovered that the second Wednesday was a great holiday. This put the whole committee in awful embarrassment, and the Prince most of all; for he was pretty sure of getting blame in high quarters. It was proposed to him to compromise the matter with the actress, and get her to consent to further postponement. The Prince refused. "It cannot be," he said, "It cannot be. I have passed my word, and I will stand by it, let what may happen; promises must be kept." And he bore reproach, censure, jests, and satirical remarks about favouritism and private motives; he put up with everything, in short, that he might keep his word; and on the solemn festival-day the actress had her benefit in a crowded theatre.

Such was Prince Gagarin, a proud but noble character, universally respected throughout the whole empire, revered by thousands, hated by none, and who fell by the hand of an assassin.

Who could the villain be who had perpetrated such a deed, on such a man?

This was the question that engrossed the attention of all Petersburg—aye, and of half the empire, until judicial investigation solved the strange riddle in a manner yet more strange. The murderer was not a bad man, did not hate Prince Gagarin, knew him not by sight, and was in despair when informed who it was he had slain. How, then, came the tragedy about? From a shocking, but a very simple cause. The Prince fell a sacrifice for the sins of Russian bureaucracy.

A forester in the imperial service was dismissed for an act of insubordination; whether justly or not, I am unable to say, but his fault cannot have been very grave, for, on an appeal made by the dismissed man with reference to the facts elicited, the Emperor, although he would not interfere with the decision of the authorities, and consequently maintained the dismissal, ordered a compensation of 300 silver rubles to be paid to the petitioner. Who now was happier than the forester? He had obtained an appointment on a private domain at the other side of Orenburg, and only awaited, to enable him to perform the journey, payment of the sum promised to him. But that payment came not; one month after another passed by, one petition after another was given in, one twenty ruble note after another was paid for the drawing up and forwarding of these; still no payment was obtained.

Meanwhile, the forester's new employers pressed him to repair to his post, which was too weighty a one to remain long vacant. To this pressure from without was soon added one equally painful from within;—a numerous family cried out for bread. The long period passed without employment had unmercifully swallowed up the forester's scanty savings; all that he possessed of any value soon disappeared to buy food for the hungry children; daily did he repeat his urgent entreaties,—daily was he referred from one bureau to another. At last hope gave way to despair. On that unlucky morning he made a last attempt—again in vain. The gentlemen in the public offices had their pens to mend before they could write; then they had a great deal to write before they could possibly expedite the affair. The poor petitioner had no longer the means to bribe them to expedition; he returned, heart-broken, to his starving family. As he reached home, the postman brought him a letter from

Orenburg; its contents put the finishing stroke to his misfortunes. His employers wrote to decline his services; it having been found impossible to do any longer without a forester, they had been compelled to appoint another to the post. The unhappy man's senses nearly left him under this fresh stroke of a cruel fate: the whimpering of his suffering wife, the cries of his hungry children, roused him from his stupefaction. Naturally a passionate man, he fell into a fit of boundless fury. "They deprived me of my bread," he cried, trembling with rage; "and when the Emperor's goodness has given me means to earn a living, the vile sluggards and gluttons, who themselves know not want, convert his goodness into a curse. I am a lost man, but I will not perish alone. The first of the wretches whom I meet shall make the journey with me!" Then he locked himself in his room. In a quarter of an hour he rejoined his anxious wife. Seemingly calm, he took leave of her, kissed her and their children, and said he was going once more to the public office, whither he already had so often been. He spoke the truth; he went thither, but with desperation in his heart, and a brace of pistols in his pocket.

Scarcely had he reached the Anitschkow Bridge, when at a signal from a servant a carriage and four drove up. The forester quickened his space, and reached the carriage just as the servant opened the door. At that moment, as fate had decreed, Prince Gagarin came out of the house. As he set his foot on the carriage steps, the murderer sent a bullet point blank through his heart. Casting away the discharged weapon, the wretched man drew another, and applied the muzzle to his forehead; but before he could pull the trigger the standers-by seized his arm; without resistance he suffered himself to be disarmed, and, himself more resembling a corpse than a living being, stood motionless, gazing on the bleeding body before him. It was just at that moment that I reached the scene of action.

The trial was not long: half an hour after the deed the murderer made a full and minute confession of all the circumstances I have here set down, and adhered to it to the last. He was sentenced to receive two thousand blows with sticks, and to be banished for life to Siberia.

The feelings first awakened by this event were sorrow for the murdered man, horror and indignation at his murderer; but when sympathy and regret for the former had run their course, and the particular circumstances became generally known which had driven an honest and previously irreproachable man, the father of a family, to so terrible and desperate an act—then pity replaced aversion, and the curses were for those faithless and corrupt officials who had converted the Emperor's beneficence into a malediction, and had been the indirect cause of such terrible misery. The indignation thus roused was goneral; everybody called to mind the acts of oppression and wrong that all had more or less had to endure by reason of the shameful mal-administration of the departments of justice and police; soon the murderer came to be not less pitied than the murdered, and the public feeling might be summed up thus: "'Tis sad, indeed," men said, "that such a thing should have happened, and sadder still that an innocent man should have been the victim; but it will be a lessen to the bureaucracy; God only grant that they profit by it."

Meanwhile, the day of punishment arrived. On a severe winter's morning the unhappy criminal was conducted to the place of execution; the surgeon grasped his hand, and led him along the agonising path between the double rank of soldiers armed with rods.

On the previous day the Grand Duke Michael, who had been absent, returned to St. Petersburg. He heard of the approaching execution, and inquired minutely into all the circumstances which had led to the crime. Michael, whose acute understanding could be surpassed only by the warmth and benevolence of his heart, which ever throbbed in sympathy with his fellow creatures; Michael, whose life was devoted to struggles against the iniquities of the bureaucracy; Michael, well-acquainted with this weakness of Russian administration, the veil cast over which he had pierced in countless places with the shafts of his keen wit and biting satire; this noble prince, who was aware of his brother's severity, but who also well knew his magnanimous and truly imperial nature;—Michael hastened next morning to the Emperor, exposed to him, in all their smallest details, the circumstances of the crime, threw the chief

blame upon those who—although the law could not punish them for their negligence—were undoubtedly the real culprits; prayed, entreated, supplicated the Emperor to pardon the offender, or at least to postpone the punishment. His truly chivalrous character and earnest pleadings at last gained the day. With the speed of an arrow an aide-de-camp was despatched to the scene of the horrible punishment; in the far distance the officer commanding the parade saw the horseman and his waving handkerchief, gave a signal, and the uplifted rods were suspended, as by enchantment, in the air—but at the same moment the criminal fell to the ground. Rescue came too late. The delinquent was placed upon a cart and taken to the hospital, but the next morning he was a corpse.

A half-crazed widow, and five orphan infants, wept over the unhappy man's grave.

A noble and generous prince murdered—an honest man driven to despair and crime—an innocent family reduced to beggary, and rendered miserable for life—the Emperor's bounty transformed into a curse;—such are the works of an arbitrary and unprincipled bureaucracy, to whom must unquestionably be imputed the melancholy fate of the unfortunate Prince Gagarin.

CHAPTER XXII.

GOSTINOY DWOR.

THE stranger who arrives in Paris for the first time jumps into a cabriolet and drives to an hotel; but he does not alight from the vehicle, he only hands over his baggage to the porter, and hurries off, without giving himself time to change his dress, to the Palais Royal; for the Palais Royal has so identified itself with his ideas of Paris, and his curiosity to become acquainted with Paris is so great, that he thinks he cannot soon enough feast his eyes on this abridgment of the French capital. Subsequently he may get intimately to know all parts of Paris; but, on his return to his own country, the first word he says concerning the capital of the world

is, "the Palais Royal," and the first question put to him is assuredly also about the Palais Royal.

St. Petersburg, too, has its Palais Royal, but nobody speaks of it; no foreigner has ever heard it extolled; amidst the splendour and magnificence which there prevails, it passes, if not unnoticed, at least unwondered at; and yet it is one of the most remarkable edifices Petersburg can boast. Certainly it differs greatly, as regards both exterior and interior, from the Palais Royal; and yet it resembles it in the main point; namely, in supplying all the material wants of humanity. The necessaries and luxuries of life, of every kind, and from all the countries of the world, are there collected together, and offered for sale. Its exterior is certainly not to be compared, for beauty and interest, with that of the Palais Royal, not even since M. Mauguin's cruel edict deprived the latter building, in the year 1830, of a very frivolous, but at the same time a very remarkable attraction. On the other hand, the intrinsic value of its contents, of the almost incredible treasure accumulated within its walls, immeasurably exceeds that of the costly tinsel displayed in the King's palace at Paris.

This colossal bazaar was originally of wood, and stood upon the Moika. A terrible conflagration destroyed it in the year 1780, and with the building the flames consumed fully half the property of the shopkeepers of St. Petersburg. As some sort of compensation to the sufferers, the finest square in the city was allotted for the new building, and an edifice of unparalleled size was constructed. In extent one-third larger than the Palais Royal, it has the additional advantage that, having been built for the express purpose of commerce, its plan is the one best adapted to that object. The Palais Royal is an enormous quadrangle, which includes two large theatres, one of them the first in France, the celebrated and unsurpassed *Théatre Français*, the other the *Théatre du Palais Royal*, which owes its fame principally to Dejazet and Samson, who, when it was opened in 1831, devoted their talents to its service. On three sides (upon the fourth the quadrangle is bounded by the court of the palace of the late Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe) the spacious and beautiful apartments of the second floor are let as private residences. Here, too, before public gambling was abolished, were

several large suites of rooms occupied by gaming tables. The outward faces of the building are also, in great part, taken up by shops. The chief beauty of the place consists in the pleasant garden which occupies the whole interior space of the long quadrangle. Around this garden, which is planted with shady trees, and refreshed by cool fountains, are broad arcades whose handsome iron railings, and the passages leading to them, are shut up at night—and sometimes in broad daylight, when Paris happens to be shrouded in the gloom of political convulsions. On the other side of these railings, which run all round the garden (from which the palace court is separated by a handsome gallery, called the Galerie d'Orleans), are rows of elegant and magnificent shops, with splendid plate glass windows, through which are seen the choicest products of Parisian industry and taste. At night the blaze of gas, the throng of well-dressed loungers, the sounds of music, and the coolness which, when the weather is hot, in all Paris is only to be found near the pleasant fountains of the Palais Royal, combine to cast a fairy-like spell over the visitors to this delightful resort. A person who should arrive at Paris in the evening, visit the Palais Royal and nothing else, and then quit the city, would carry away with him, and retain for his whole life, the unclouded and delightful recollection of the most remarkable and beautiful spot in the whole of the French capital.*

The Gostinoy Dwor of St. Petersburg possesses none of these attractions.

Between the Kasansky and the Anitschkow Palace, before you reach the garden of the Alexander Theatre, there rises on the right-hand side of the Newsky Perspective, a colossal stone building, of a square form, and enclosing a vast space. I counted 3100 paces which it took me to walk round the arcades that surround it. Broad stone steps lead up to the colonnades. The building is vaulted and extremely massive, two stories high, but inhabited by no one. There are no iron gratings to shut it up, as at the Palais Royal; but when night approaches, and the shops are closed—which takes

* It is hardly necessary to remark, that this high-flown description of the Palais Royal twenty years ago, is totally inapplicable to it in its present decayed state. — T.

place at dusk at all seasons of the year, it being strictly forbidden to have lights in the building—the watchmen extend ropes all round the place, from pillar to pillar. These cords are a warning barrier which must not be overstepped; disregard of the silent injunction would bring its own punishment, and be expiated by the transgressor with his life; for round the interior of the arcades runs a second set of ropes, passing through iron rings, which are attached to the collars of enormous wolf-hounds of great strength and fierceness. This mode of securing the four-footed sentries enables them to patrol a long beat; and when any one approaches the stone steps, they never fail to reiterate, by howl and bark, the warning conveyed by the exterior ropes. Here and there burns a glimmering lamp, in a niche under the image of some saint, and by its feeble illumination of these gloomy vaults, only increases their dismal aspect. Such is the Gostinoy Dwor by night.

By daylight the building has no very cheerful appearance. The huge vaulted passages, built of rough stone, have a damp and not very clean look. The arches are plain and without decoration o any kind, the windows are small and dull, the shops display only so much of their contents as is absolutely necessary to let you know what description of goods they contain. At each shop door stands a Russian in his ordinary dress, in a long caftan, or in winter in a fur or sheepskin pelisse, a glass of smoking tea in his hand, which he gulps down without milk or sugar, whilst he invites the passers-by to enter and purchase. If he steps out of his doorway into the arcade, it assuredly is for the purpose of snatching an infant from a passing nurse, to fondle and kiss it, and, if he be a dealer in toys or eatables, to cram its mouth and pockets with the latter, or to make it presents of the former. This passion of the Russians for overwhelming children with gifts and caresses, is so universal, that my physician strongly enjoined me to forbid my children ever accepting the hospitality of these shopkeepers; for it not unfrequently happens that the doctor vainly seeks the cause of some violent indigestion, of which the nursemaids profess entire ignorance, until at last rigorous examination extorts from them a confession that the little patients, during their walks abroad, have partaken too freely

of the marchpane and pastry proffered them by the kindness of the bearded Russian shopkeepers.

Inside, the shops of the Gostinoy Dwor are roomy and comfortable, but by no means elegant. It would be difficult, however, for the most fantastical imagination to devise any want that could not here be at once supplied. You might go to the Gostinoy Dwor in your nightgown, and leave it, in two hours' time, completely equipped according to the latest fashion, seated in an elegant carriage with four fine horses, coachman, outriders, and livery servants; for if carriages and horses are not exactly kept on sale in the building, on the other hand, brokers and dealers are there in plenty, eager to supply you. Would you breakfast? From the potato to the oyster, from cheese to pineapple, you have your choice. Passing out of the arches, you then enter the internal area of the building; that space which in the Palais Royal is taken up by trees and fountains. Here it is filled with shops, warehouses, cellars, and stores, innumerable and capacious; and is so richly stocked with goods of every kind, costly colonial produce, furs, leather, oil, spirits, metals, manufactures of all sorts, from tailors' wares up to the most costly jewellery,—with all and every conceivable object, in short, of necessity and luxury,—that you are forced to admit that such a mass of merchandise, collected in one place, is not to be found in London or any other city in the world; and you will cease to wonder at my assertion, that the terrible fire of 1780 swallowed up half the property of the whole commercial community of St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLASSIFICATION.

RUSSIA is inhabited by two sorts of men; by Freemen and by Serfs. But who *is* free in Russia? The question is hard to answer. Let us put another. Who are *not* free? The reply is of the easiest. All, save one man, who unites, in his own person, power, right, and freedom.

There is an old German song that runs something in this way :—

"The sparrow eats the fly,
The sparrow-hawk the sparrow,
The eagle eats the sparrow hawk;"

and so on. Here you have the gradation of Russian freedom; it depends entirely on the appetite and good stomach of the eagle, and he has fattened all the others the better to fatten himself. That is the delicate allegory of an autocratic *régime*. Meanwhile, it is undeniable that for Russia hitherto this has been the only *régime* possible, and perhaps for a long time to come it will continue so to be; and it must also be admitted, that in the manner in which the system has been carried out ever since Peter the Third's *peaceful* end, it is the only wholesome and improving one for the country. Catherine and all her successors have really been desirous of Russia's good; Paul, too, desired it; that he was half crazy none will impute to him as a crime. He might have said with Joan of Arc, "Alas! it was not my choice!" But nevertheless he did much good, especially in the organisation of the army; and when a Russian despot is disposed to improvement, his progress is rapid, not being delayed by the drag-chain of constituent chambers and national assemblies. There exists certainly a sort of consulting senate; but on important affairs the Czar—using the court language, which is French—says, *Passons là dessus!* The recent history of Russia justifies such bold steps by the results it exhibits. Whoever investigates the almost incredible progress which this still semi-barbarous nation has made in the last eighty years, is compelled to admit, however unwillingly, that such gigantic strides are only possible under an autocrat's rule.

Although the Russian, great or small, lofty or humble, is before his Czar (like we other mortals before God), neither more nor less than nothing, yet these nonentities have a political classification, and are duly divided into nobles, burghers, and peasants. The nobles are free, that is to say, as free as any one can be in Russia; the noblest cannot marry according to his heart's choice, if that choice does not chime in with the Czar's good pleasure; or, if he desires to go to Italy, and the Czar strikes out the word "Naples" on his passport, and inserts "Tobolsk," the horses, against their master's will, gallop eastward instead of south-west—such is the instinct of Russian

horses. Or if by chance he desires to serve in the cavalry of the guard, and the Czar sends him aboard a sloop of war, he sails upon the ocean instead of riding on horseback, and does so without a word of objection or complaint, because it is the Master's will. Such things happen very rarely; but they *may* happen, and when they *do*, they happen *de jure* as well as *de facto*, for the Czar's will is the Russian's law. For this slight pressure of the eagle's claw, the sparrow-hawk, once more at liberty, stoutly avenges himself on the sparrow, which in its turn gobbles up the fly.

To return, however, to our classification. Next to that source of all power and greatness, the Court, stands the nobility, which is divided into two classes—the aristocracy of birth, and the aristocracy of *service* or government employment. The possessor of the first-mentioned sort brings it with him into the world, and retains it until death—always supposing some gracious decree does not intervene to send him off to the Caucasus, shorn alike of hair and aristocracy. This, however, happens only as a punishment for a crime; and even in this condemnation to service as a private soldier there is a certain degree of mercy; for in the ranks of the army, and under fire of the enemy, the degraded nobleman has opportunity of regaining rank and title.

The second order of nobility, the official aristocracy, is within reach of any one who aspires to it—if he only live long enough. On entering the public service he takes his place in Class Fourteen. That is just a little more than nothing at all, and usually elicits a deep sigh from the person who confesses himself to belong to that class, and a compassionate smile from him to whom the confession is made. Promotion, however, is pretty rapid; and as, if I do not mistake, nobility is attained with the eighth class, which point even the dullest connot fail to reach, even by mere progressive seniority, so the candidate, if he lives, is sure of attaining his object. The higher classes confer a military grade, from lieutenant up to general. A counsellor of state, for instance, has lieutenant-general's rank; a state counsellor of the first order a general's rank, with the title of Excellency. The hereditary nobles begin at once with the rank of major; which must, however, be earned over again by service to the state; for in social position and estimation the official aris-

tocracy stand far higher than the hereditary; and a high-born count of a low official class, feels himself very small beside a plebeian who has outstripped him in official rank. This arrangement is wise and just, and does much to compensate the tyranny of birth, whose aristocratic exclusiveness it overthrows; procuring at the same time due consideration and esteem for the only true nobility—the nobility of good conduct and useful services.

Immediately after this official nobility comes the commonalty, or class of burgesses, a free class, consisting chiefly of traders. In this class, also, there are gradations. Highest upon the ladder stand the merchants of the "first guild," the aristocracy of capital and industry. The middle station is occupied by merchants of the second guild, whose commerce has narrower limits; whilst on the lowest range, next the ground, are found traders of the third guild,—petty dealers, who have not even, I believe, the right of drawing bills of exchange. The commercial aristocracy of the first guild, which enjoys the privileges of the nobility, imitates it in many respects—drives four horses, keeps a sumptuous house, inhabits beautiful villas, and in every possible way, and in emulation of the great nobles, strives to ruin itself,—with less success, however, than those it apes, since the inexhaustible fountains of trade constantly refill the empty coffers. One can hardly form an idea in Germany of the vast wealth of some of these Russian merchants. Stieglitz, one of the richest bankers in Russia, left behind him, at his death, a fortune of 40,000,000 of rubles banco, besides a great deal of land. And yet there is no dearth in Russia of people richer than he was.

The merchant of the second guild represents the true citizen class (*Bürgerstand*, *bourgeoisie*) of Russia, so far as such a class there exists. He is moderately rich, unostentatious in his manner of life, and limits his social intercourse to his own family and immediate friends. His dwelling is substantial and comfortable in all its parts; his table excellent, and hospitably spread for every one; for in hospitality he does not yield to the aristocracy of his class. He expects, however, that guests will be content with what they find, and eat their barley broth and beef to-day with as good appetite as their truffles and bears' paws, yesterday. His equipage is not brilliant; but his horse will trot against any in the city Of an

evening he is a frequenter of the Alexandrian or Stone Theatre, where operas and ballets are performed. Although there are no enormously rich individuals in this class, as a body it represents a colossal and very solid capital.

The traders, of the third rank, druggists, forwarding agents, and the like, live very quiet and retired. They derive a decent competency from their dealings, are well pleased so long as they can avoid getting to loggerheads with the police, and represent the class which the French designate by the word "*épicier*." With them conclude the commercial classes; which, besides military men and government officials, include all the free population of Russia.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MASTER AND SLAVE.

THE origin of serfdom in Russia is unknown; even Russian writers contradict each other on this point. The assertion of several of them that it was first introduced under Feodor, is refuted by the fact that it already existed in the time of Wasilje Ivanowitsch. But it may be traced much further back, to the period of Tartar domination. In the middle of the fifteenth century, even the Russian princes were subject to the Tartars; or, as the latter were wont to express it, "serfs and peasants of the Khans of the Golden Horde." At that time the Russian princes stood in the position of vassals to the Tartar khans. The khans set up and pulled down the Russian princes at pleasure; brought them before their tribunal; passed judgments on them, depriving them of freedom, and even of life, and exacted tribute from those whom they confirmed in their authority. To collect this tribute, they sent ambassadors to the courts of the Russian princes, who received the envoys with the most striking tokens of reverence and submission. They went on foot to the gates of their capitals to receive them, and led their horses by the bridles into the very courts of their palaces. There the ambassadors seated themselves on thrones, and announced the khans' commands to the princes, who heard them kneeling, in which

humble posture they had also welcomed the ambassadors. The splendid manner in which these were treated during their stay corresponded with this reception, and gifts and feasts followed each other in uninterrupted succession. On the other hand, when the princes sent ambassadors to the khans, they were received only by one or two of the great officers of the Tartar court, all the hospitality shown them consisted in the gift of a few oxen, and, when admitted to an audience, they had to kneel to present their greeting to the khans, and to empty the cup of welcome in the same posture. As recently as the sixteenth century, when the Russians had succeeded in shaking off the Tartar rule, not even the good fortune of Wasilje Ivanowitsch, nor the terror inspired by the name of Ivan Wasiljewitsch, could protect them from fresh inroads of the Tartars, which had very nearly brought the scarcely-liberated Russian nation once more under the old yoke.

In similar and still more dependent relations did the various classes of the Russian people stand towards each other. Peter the Great first erected the nobility into a real power, by enacting the law of primogeniture, and thus securing to them the unalienable possession of their property. By a ukase of the 23rd of March, 1714, he abolished the law which previously to that date had enjoined the division of the family estates amongst all the sons, and thereby he created a new order in the state, to be viewed as the foundation upon which the future universal freedom of the Russians is to be based. This order, which represents the Russian *tiers-état*, is that of the Odnodworzen, or free peasants, and includes a great portion of the younger sons of the nobility, who have only received out of the paternal estate as much as would enable them to stock a farm, on which they live as freemen, and do not forfeit any of the prerogatives of their rank as nobles. Their position is precisely similar to that of the poor Hungarian noble, who, with spur on heel and sword by side, follows the plough, and nevertheless, proud as a magnate, takes his seat in the national assembly—a privilege, by the bye, which the institutions of his country do not concede to the Russian. It was Peter III. who first gave the nobility *complete freedom* (in the Russian sense of the words): how much (or how little) was comprehended in this "complete freedom," may best be judged

from the tenor of the various ukases by which Catherine II. extended it. By these it was for the first time decreed that the nobleman could not be deprived of property or life without a trial, that he might dispose freely of property acquired by purchase (of fiefs only as the law provided), and that even as a private soldier he should no longer be liable to corporal punishment. The same ukases first constituted him rightful owner of all the treasures that might be disinterred on his property,—a highly important provision in a country rich in minerals; they gave him license also to establish manufactories, and to found hamlets and markets; and they exempted his person from taxes, and his houses from having soldiers quartered in them.

From the position of the nobility in the eighteenth century, one may form a pretty good idea of that of the peasants, who, with the exception of the Odnodworzen already referred to, found themselves in a state of complete serfdom. With the exception of their lives and the honour of their women, their owner was the unconditional and unlimited lord and master of their labour, and of what apparently belonged to them. I say apparently, because they only *appeared* to possess; for what they had was theirs no longer than their master chose not to strip them of it. Even the two above-mentioned restrictions imposed upon his power were purely illusory, in consequence of the vast extent of the country, the immense distance, and of the consequent impossibility for aggrieved serfs to reach the residence of the Czars;—whence arose the Russian proverb, "God is high above us, and the Czar is far away."

Legally, the same deplorable state of things prevails at the present day, with only the difference—as related in Chapter II.—that serfs are now regarded as an integral portion of the soil, from which they can no longer be separated. Formerly their lord had unlimited power of disposing of them; even the sanctity of the marriage tie was no guarantee against a forcible separation: the serf was not a man, but an article of traffic and merchandise; his position was precisely that of the helot of ancient times, and of the negro slave at the present day. Now, at least, he forms part of his owner's *immoveables*. He is a fixture, and can only be transferred to other hands by the sale of the estate to which he pertains. In

the conclusion of such sales, the situation of the property, the quality of the soil, the greater or less proximity to a large town, the forests, roads, canals, &c., all enter largely into consideration; but the number of the dwellers upon the estate is what chiefly regulates its value, because by that is to be estimated the extent of cultivated ground. In the time of the French war, when estates were sold, male serfs were usually rated (women are not reckoned) at 40 rubles banco; often, however, at a much higher sum, as much as 150 or even 200 rubles. At that time paper money, which was issued in very small quantities, had a far higher value. At the present day the average rate is 100 rubles for each serf.

The lot of the serfs—always an unhappy one—is more or less endurable according to the character of their master, on whose good pleasure depends the amount of compulsory labour, and of tribute in money and in kind. He shows his vassals the portion of land they must cultivate for him, and allots the remainder amongst them according to his own will and caprice. He is at liberty, if he so pleases, to take from them land which their labour has already got into cultivation, and to settle them upon some spot as yet uncleared. Just when he pleases he can take possession of all that belongs to them; towards them he has no other duty to fulfil but to provide them, in time of scarcity, with daily food, which, on such occasions, is usually scanty enough, and to furnish them with seed corn, and with the cattle required for ploughing. When estates, in proportion as their population increases, gets almost entirely lotted out amongst the serfs, the owners exact from the latter, instead of the soccage, or compulsory and unpaid labour, a yearly tribute called *Obrok*, whose average amount is ten or twelve rubles banco. If the lord of the soil fixes neither obrok nor amount of labour, the law fixes three days' work a week for every male who has attained his fifteenth year, and for women and children labour in proportion to their strength. This is generally decided by the Upravittli (steward of large estates), or, on smaller domains, by the Prikaschtschiki; these, many of them serfs themselves, for the most part rule with a rod of iron, and the unfortunates are truly to be pitied who come under their domination. Happily for the serfs, the system of *obrok* is in most instances adopted, and if they pay this tribute regularly,

they lead an endurable and tolerably independent existence. Many, especially young people, prefer to repair to the towns, and easily obtain permission from their masters, as they are then expected to pay higher *obrok*. They receive a passport, which is renewed annually, on payment of the tribute, and they are then at liberty to follow the occupation they please. Many work as day labourers and journeymen in the large cities; others hire themselves out as coachmen, servants, cooks, &c.; some devote themselves to trade, and, as the Russian is born a trader, these often attain to competency and wealth. Do they, however, belong to a hard and selfish master, riches can never be theirs, for as fast as they accumulate, he despoils them, thus nipping their prosperity in the bud. Concealment of the real state of their finances is impossible, since they are not independent, but can trade only under their master's name, so that he has at all times access to their books, and an insight into their affairs. If a serf is so unfortunate as to be owned by such a master, his lot is pitiable in the extreme; all the hard-earned fruits of his toil flow into the coffers of his tyrant, who, himself often poor, plays the great man at St. Petersburg or Moscow on the strength of the industry of a few hundred peasants, and by his exorbitant and oppressive exactions, sucks the very blood from the veins, and marrow from the bones of his unfortunate vassals. Of such unhappy wretches the existence is one of wailing and despair; they pursue their occupations mechanically and without interest, and sink at last into complete indifference to everything, and into a sort of dull demi-idiocy. Their decaying habitations resemble the dens of wild beasts rather than human abodes; their food is bad and unwholesome; their half-starved bodies are clad in squalid rags. Should they contrive, in spite of still recurring exactions, to accumulate property, it profits them not. Fearing to be dispossessed of it by their tyrants, they bury it in the ground; and it has often happened, after the death of poor wretches who had led a life of abject poverty, that considerable sums of money belonging to them have been found concealed in cellars, barns, and other hiding-places. There can be no doubt that this fear of spoliation withdraws very important sums from public circulation, and in that manner cramps, in no trifling degree, the commercial ener-

gies of the country. One of the many evils, although not the greatest, resulting from the fatal institution of serfdom, and from the inhumanity and oppression which are often found inseparable from it. This is the state of things to whose ultimate abolition the Emperor Nicholas unceasingly and successfully directs the whole energy of his powerful will.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SERF.

THE serf constitutes an enormous proportion of the population of Russia. He is the prop of the whole empire, the substance of its material greatness, its strength and its guard, its nourisher and supporter. He is its agriculturist, its workman, its servant.

The class of serfs has two divisions: the Crown peasants, and the peasants belonging to private owners. Both of these classes are serfs in the full sense of the word. A third class, now in its infancy, but which, thanks to the present government of Russia, is rapidly increasing and extending itself, and which bids fair to swallow up the two others in the course of another century or so, is that of the *free peasants*, which gradually, and keeping peace with the progress of civilization, springs from the two predominant classes.

The free peasants, numerically still very insignificant, live, as free and happy men, upon their own land; are active, frugal, and, without exception, well off. This they must be, for considerable means are necessary for the purchase of their freedom; and, once free, and in possession of a farm of their own, their energy and industry, manifested even in a state of slavery, are redoubled by the enjoyment of personal liberty, and their earnings naturally increase in a like measure.

The second class, the crown peasants, are far better off (setting aside, of course, the consciousness of freedom) than the peasants of Germany. They must furnish their quota of recruits, but that is their only material burthen. Besides that, they annually pay to the Crown a sum of five rubles (about four shillings) for each male per-

son of the household. Supposing the family to include eight working men, which is no small number for a farm, the yearly tribute paid amounts to thirty-two shillings. And what a farm that must be which employs eight men all the year round! In what country of civilised Europe has the peasant so light a burthen to bear? How much heavier those which press upon the English farmer, the French, the German, and above all the Austrian, who often gives up three-fourths of his harvest in taxes. If the Crown peasant be so fortunate as to be settled in the neighbourhood of a large town, his prosperity soon exceeds that even of the Altenburg husbandmen, said to be the richest in all Germany. On the other hand, he can never purchase his freedom; hitherto, at least, no law of the Crown has granted him this privilege.

Finally, the third class of serfs consists of those belonging to private individuals. These are the true serfs—the slaves, in short. The whole life of a serf of this class is a mere lottery; his happiness—that is to say, his fate for the moment—depends on the turn of the wheel which gives him, in his master, a prize or a blank. And even when fortune in this respect favours him, he is constantly in danger of losing to-day what he yesterday won. There are numbers of these serfs who cheerfully support their lot; and if they are in good hands, it is not an unhappy one, for their material wants are well supplied, and they cannot miss the liberty they never knew. The Russian government does an immense deal for the alleviation of the condition of these unfortunate people, who as yet are not ripe for complete emancipation; and, truth to tell, those amongst them who are greatly to be pitied are the exceptions to the rule. But is it not sufficient wretchedness to be still upon so low a grade of mental cultivation that the absence of all the rights of man does not appear a deprivation?

The general lot of these serfs cannot be very well described, as that of each one amongst them depends upon his master's idiosyncracy, upon his passions, humours, expectations. In character and capacity, however, the serfs are generally much alike—those, at least, of European Russia, to whom I here particularly refer. As regards physical characteristics, the Russian peasant is usually strong, healthy, and of a masculine style of beauty. This last, however, is

a beauty of growth and form, rather than of physiognomy, which latter has usually rather a Sarmatian cast and expression: yet I have often seen persons of that class whose really elevated style of beauty enchanted me; heads which I should have gazed at with equal wonder and admiration had I encountered them beneath the sunny sky of Italy. I shall never forget the *artelschik* of a druggist's warehouse in St. Petersburg, whose really ideal beauty riveted my attention every time I met him. The elegant and noble figure, the pure form of the youthful, oval, and somewhat pallid countenance, the mild and speaking eye, the chin shaded with the down of early manhood, the rich, evenly-parted hair, streaming in thick locks over the shoulders—truly this slave, sprung from the dregs of the people, might well have inspired a painter, and sat as model for the genius of freedom. Such remarkable specimens of manly beauty are certainly of extremely rare occurrence amongst the serfs; but, nevertheless, as a whole, the personal appearance of the class is agreeable and prepossessing. As regards their character, the moral pressure seems to have weighed more heavily upon their souls than upon their bodies. Left entirely to himself, the Russian carries himself erectly, and his naturally dignified bearing is often imposing. In presence of his master, and especially in colloquy with him, he seems shy and oppressed, and his frame of mind influences the attitude of his body, which, on such occasions, is usually bent and depressed. Only in the case of coachmen did I perceive a difference in this respect; they stood bolt upright before their masters, and in their tone and manner of expression betrayed none of that cringing subserviency which characterises other male servants in Russia. Whether this arises from the more independent nature of their occupation, whether the consciousness that their master's life is at any moment in their hands imparts to them a prouder feeling of equality, or what, in short, may be the reason of their difference of manner, I am unable to say, and must content myself with stating the fact without assigning a cause.

With his cringing humility the Russian serf combines enormous cunning. Under the first he carefully conceals his real disposition, whilst he well knows how to get round his master for his own advantage and the attainments of his own ends. This humility, which

had its origin in fear, has now become the serf's second nature. But, whilst fawning like a dog, he also possesses that animal's nobler qualities of attachment and fidelity to his master. The master who succeeds in rousing in the bosom of the serf that feeling of affection which from childhood has been suppressed, who, by showing him sympathy and benevolence, at last makes himself beloved by him, may build upon his fidelity as upon a rock, for that serf will lay down his life for him, unconditionally and without a moment of hesitation. The same Russian who, for a glass of brandy, kisses his lord's hand and knee—aye, and the very hem of his garment—pours out his blood to save him, joyfully sacrificing his whole earthly wealth to retain him as his master. In the neighbourhood of Kasan, a landed proprietor, oppressed by debts, was obliged to offer some villages for sale. As soon as his vassals, to whom he had always been a kind master, were aware of his embarrassments, they held a meeting, and subscribed the greater part of their hard-earned savings to relieve their beloved lord from his debts, and keep him as their owner. They asked no bond, no acknowledgment: it was entirely the effect of faithful and sincere attachment. And if a landholder, who is beloved by his serfs, has children, and allows the serfs to come about them, the serfs attach themselves to them with an enthusiasm of affection which every day increases, and which no amount of cruel treatment, unhappiness, and peril can deaden or destroy. The fidelity of such a serf is never belied; in behalf of the lad to whom he has attached himself, he will submit to any ill usage, and will even brave his master's anger, deeming himself recompensed, for the hardest that may befall him, by a single glance from his darling, a pressure of whose hand would send him joyfully to encounter death. Such is the fidelity and affection of the Russian serf.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A MERCHANT OF THE FIRST GUILD, AND A SPENDTHRIFT OF THE FIRST MAGNITUDE.

YOU are standing beneath the arch of the *Etat-Major* at St. Petersburg, in contemplation of the superb building. Look at yonder bearded Russian coming at full trot down the great Morskoije. A well-worn coat of skins envelopes his body, a beaver cap, shining as a looking glass, covers his head. He sits on a droschki, a low, four-wheeled vehicle, the whole body of which consists of one board, three feet in length. Riding upon this, his feet and legs exposed to the mire splashed up by his wheels, he skilfully guides his spanking black horse, a powerfully limbed brute, with a ram's head of no great beauty. You take him for a coachman, driving his master's mare to the farrier; the master would surely never exhibit himself on such a drag. You are mistaken. That shabby board upon wheels, to which is harnessed that not very showy horse—a trotter from the Orloff stud, sold, as a great favour, for 10,000 paper rubles—belongs to the old Russian himself, who, having just returned from a journey, desires to ascertain for himself whether his stables have been properly cared for in his absence, or who, perhaps, is on his way to the race-course to wager a few hundred thousand rubles on the mare he is driving before him. To-morrow you may meet this original—not the only one of his sort in St. Petersburg—in an elegant phaeton and four, the horses harnessed two and two, which is a privilege of the nobility,—shared, however by the merchants of the First Guild. Of that guild is yonder splashed and bearded Russian. He has his sixty or eighty millions of rubles at his command, and is known here as *old* Jacobleff, to distinguish him from his only son, who is more capable of squandering the eighty millions than of accumulating one.

The origin of this remarkable man (remarkable in many respects, and amongst others by reason of his benevolence) is unknown. Very old people have said that they remembered his father, when he first

arrived in St. Petersburg, wrapped in a sheepskin, the four-cornered Polish cap upon his head, and with *labkars* on his feet.*

In what way this man's son acquired his colossal fortune, is unknown; all that is known is, that he devoted himself to commerce, was successful in various enterprises, and purchased, some twenty years ago, property in several parts of the interior of the empire. The story goes that in digging a well in one of these estates, he came upon a treasure, hidden there in the time of the French invasion, and which the owners had not been able again to discover. These, however, are doubtless mere popular traditions, which have had their origin in the man's fabulous wealth. Fact it is, that, next to Prince Demidoff, he is considered the wealthiest private individual in Russia, and possesses houses, estates, mines, and extensive commercial connections such as no one else can boast of. Nothwithstanding this, he lives in a retired manner, in a burgher circle, and keeps aloof from the nobility, to whose society his quality of a merchant of the First Guild, as well as his enormous wealth, would at any time procure him admission. But he prefers to be a little prince in his own house and on his own estates. Still active, as at the commencement of his career, he does not disdain, on festive occasions, to vie with the nobles in luxury and splendour, in which he is then unsurpassed by the first amongst them. In general, however, (and this is characteristic of his whole class) he is a thorough trader, imbued with the commercial spirit, and taking such pride in the exactitude of his dealings and prices, that he would rather give away thousands than abate a farthing of any claim which he knew was just and fair, and honestly his due. A single anecdote will suffice ty give an idea of the business-like tenacity, and at the same time of the princely and haughty munificence of this Russian "Merchant of the First Guild."

When the Winter Palace was burned, the new building was to be covered with iron plates, and General Kleinmichael invited tenders for the metal. Jacobleff sent in his; he was told in reply that another person offered to supply the iron a kopeck a pound cheaper,

* *Labkars* are a covering for the feet, woven out of birch tree bark, and used by the poorest Russian peasants.

but that if he would supply it at the same price the general would recommend the Emperor to give him the preference. The contract was for a sum of several hundred thousand rubles, and worth bargaining for; Jacobleff, however, told the general that he did not drive bargains with his sovereign; that he could not give up the kopeck, but that if his majesty would graciously honour him by accepting the roof of the palace as a present, it would be his pride to supply it as solid and as beautiful as possible. The old merchant got the contract, without abatement.

Another time the Emperor was informed that Jacobleff's only son, a lieutenant in the guards, and a most unparalleled scapegrace, had gambled away at skittles, in a single afternoon, *one million rubles banco.* Indignant at such scandalous prodigality, the Emperor ordered the young man's name to be struck out of the army list. Feeling sorry for the father, he sent an aide-de-camp to break the news to him tenderly, and to assure him of his imperial favour. The aide-de-camp found him working in his room, and, after acquitting himself of his commission, handed him his son's dismissal. The old man sank back in his arm-chair as if stunned. At last he recovered himself, and, trembling, with the sweat of anxiety upon his face, he stammered out the words, "In God's name! what crime has he committed?" The officer told him of the lost million. Jacobleff drew a deep breath, wiped his brow, rose from his chair, and said in a firm tone, but evidently deeply wounded, "Thank Heaven that it is only that! I thought he had done something terrible! I cannot but feel hurt that for *such a trifle* my son should be *so severely* punished!"

This young Jacobleff had brought matters to such a pitch that his bills were current paper on the Exchange. True, that they were only worth forty or fifty per cent. of their amount; for his father had declared that he would discharge no more debts of the prodigal's contracting. At that heavy discount, however, he could always get money; for if he outlived his father, as it was natural to expect, his bills, obtained at half-price, would have their value, and be speedily paid by the profuse heir of boundless wealth. So he never lacked usurers ready to minister to his extravagance. One day an

acquaintance of mine came to me with a beaming countenance. I inquired the cause of his evident joy, and he told it me.

"This morning," he said, "I met young Jacobleff, who dragged me away, quite against my will, to breakfast with him. I had no stomach for the oysters, and could not swallow the champagne. On my entertainer's pressing inquiry what ailed me, I at last confessed to him the truth, that I was in great embarrassment, overwhelmed with debts, and by day or by night had no peace from duns.

"He burst into inextinguishable laughter. 'You in debt!' he cried, 'How can that be? Who, in Heaven's name, will give *you* credit?'

"'Such fools there unfortunately are; and as, in St. Petersburg, as you well know, nothing is given gratis, the interest has by this time increased the capital to the immense sum of 20,000 paper rubles.'

"Another Homeric guffaw interrupted my disconsolate tale. Vexed at seeing my misfortunes thus turned into ridicule, I made an abrupt movement, and, in so doing, upset my champagne-glass.

"Jacobleff ceased laughing. 'Oh, for shame!' cried he, now quite serious, 'to spill my prime champagne on account of such a trifle. Money I cannot give you, for I have not ten rubles in the house. But if you would like a bill, it is at your service.'

"'Your bills!' cried I, requiting with a sneer his scornful laughter, which still grated on my tympanum.

"'Oh! he replied, 'they are not quite so despicable as you think: for their full amount certainly no one will take them. But if I give you one for 50,000 rubles, I venture to hope you will have no difficulty in obtaining for it the 20,000 you require.'

"And, as if he were merely addressing a letter, he filled up a bill, of which he had a store by him, signed it, handed it over to me, and, with gentle violence, insisted on my eating my breakfast. I had suddenly regained my appetite; we ate and drank manfully, pushed about the bottle till 'Change time, then I jumped into my droschki, and drove to Wasili-Ostrow. In less than a quarter of an hour my business was done. Here is the cash for the bill: 20,000 rubles in good bank notes, in exchange for 50,000 in a bill,

of very dubious value. But I am out of my difficulties, and long live Jacobleff."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A MERCHANT OF THE SECOND GUILD.

IT was in the month of April, 1814. Never had the St. Petersburg sun risen upon a happier population. The bells rang in every tower and steeple; the clergy hurried in crowds to the churches; the troops, in their showiest uniforms, marched to their parade-grounds; the streets of the capital were crowded with people in holiday attire. When acquaintances met, they stopped, embraced, and kissed each other, as at the Easter festival. "At last it is over," they said, rejoicingly, to each other; "a courier has arrived: on the 31st, the Allies made their entrance into Paris."

Paskewitsch would have said: "France is at the feet of his Imperial Russian Majesty."

In the palace of the Empress-mother, great was the joyous tumult. Only in the inner apartments of Paul's widow the customary solemn stillness reigned. Even on this day of universal joy, she had not laid aside the mourning robe which she had worn ever since that terrible night in the Michaelow Palace. A chamberlain entered, and announced the visit of her confessor, who desired an audience. She closed her prayer-book, and left her cabinet to receive him. In the reception-room she found the priest in conversation with two lackeys of the Court, who retired on her appearance. The priest respectfully approached; and on the Empress's question as to the motive of his visit, he informed her of a singular event. The servants had just reported to him that, early that morning, on approaching the apartments of the Empress, they had found a covered basket standing at the outer door. On opening it, they found it to contain a new-born child.

On a sign from the Empress, a bedchamber woman brought her the infant. With her own hand, Maria Paulowna drew back the

cloth that covered it, and a blue-eyed little girl smiled confidingly upon her. The Empress gazed earnestly at the foundling.

"I exist only for others," said she with emotion, laying her hand upon the infant's head, "and you, too, shall have my care. The child is henceforward mine," added she, turning to the priest. "God has sent it me to celebrate the entrance into Paris. In memory of that, christen her by the name of Parisia."

Whilst one form of human destitution thus found an asylum in the palace of the Romanoffs, another knocked at the door of a plebeian dwelling.

At the house of Ha**, a merchant at Wasili-Ostrow, a half-naked boy implored admission. The kind-hearted merchant took him in, and gave him employment as an errand-boy in his warehouse. Iu** soon displayed so great a desire to learn, and so much zeal in his master's service, employed his leisure hours with such enthusiasm in intellectual improvement, and showed so much mercantile ability, that, after a very few years, his master appointed him to the important post of an artelschik, or factor. This subordinate position did not, however, satisfy the young man's ambition. His brain was constantly at work to devise a means of commencing a mercantile career on his own account. At last he went to his employer, and begged him to sell him a small cask of tobacco, on a month's credit. He had a speculation in view, he said, by which he hoped to gain something. His request was readily complied with; at the end of the month he paid punctually, and got two more casks on credit. From month to month his commerce and his gains increased, until at last, with the help of Ha**, who unwillingly parted with his valuable artelschik, but yet gladly forwarded the views of the industrious young merchant, he set up in business for himself. After the lapse of a few years, he who, some twelve years previously, had walked the streets of St. Petersburg barefoot, was a merchant of the second guild, doing an important business in tobacco. Active and persevering, he was fortunate in his undertakings, and built several large houses; for which enterprises, according to Russian custom, the builder may have assistance from the imperial treasury; and thus his fortune soon became considerable. Young, amiable, respected, and pros-

perous, it was not surprising that many mothers cast their eyes upon him for their daughters; but although he felt the want of domestic happiness, his heart had not yet spoken, and he would not marry without love. Once only, a young girl, whom he met in a bookseller's shop, made a strong impression on him; but their meeting was so brief that it soon appeared to him like a dream—the more so that he had not been able to learn her name. After that meeting, he went oftener than before to the book shop; but the work he sought did not appear. Thus his life flowed on, divided between business and the recreations suitable to his age and position. He had a handsome, well-furnished house, an elegant carriage, a country villa at Petrowsky. Occasionally he went into society; but passed more of his leisure in a small circle of good friends, and visited almost every evening the Burgher or Schuster Club, which derives the latter name from its founder. To this club every citizen has access, subject to a previous ballot. Many military men, and also government officials, also belong to it. The members assemble in a large, handsome building, comprising rooms for reading, billiards, cards, and conversation; and regularly every evening, from six till ten, whist, ombre, and especially préférence, the Russian's favourite game, are there played. Great banquets, comprising everything that the cellar and kitchen of St. Petersburg can produce, are also occasionally held there. Theatres in the season, and concerts in Lent, vary the amusements to be found at the club and in private society; and in summer, when business is over for the day, the country-house is resorted to, where friends pay and receive visits. There they have music, dance in the open air, ramble in the charming parks and islands that surround St. Petersburg, and make boating excursions on the Neva. The early morning hours are spent out of doors, then comes a river-bath, which every country-house possesses, and then the swift droschki whirls the man of business into the city. Such, in St. Petersburg, is the life of a merchant of the second guild.

Thus did Iu** live. On a certain Sunday afternoon he was about to drive from his country house to Kamini Ostrow, when, just as he went out, a heavy-shower of rain fell, compelling a number of ladies, who were passing at the time, to seek shelter on the

covered terrace of his villa. He immediately threw open the folding doors to offer them a refuge in his drawing-room, when to his great astonishment one of the first who entered was the young lady whom he had seen at the book shop, and who had been on her way to St. Petersburg in company with an elderly duenna when the rain surprised her. Their former brief meeting served as a pretext for better acquaintance. Pereja Sulkowka was plainly but tastefully dressed, and enchanted her admirer as much by the grace of her manner and the resources of her mind as she at first sight had done by her personal charms. Her mother, the elderly widow of an officer, was the model of a respectable matron, grave without moroseness, conversible without loquacity. The evening approached, and Iu** begged permission to escort them into the town; he drove them to their residence, where everything indicated easy circumstances and good house-keeping. Iu** cultivated the acquaintance; his first fleeting inclination developed itself into a warm affection, which was shared by the young girl, whose hand, in a few weeks' time, he demanded of her mother. He then for the first time learned that she had not power to dispose of the hand of Pereja, who was only her foster daughter, confided to her care by the Empress-Mother, and whose name, which had been corrupted by the Russian pronunciation, was Parisia. From the explanations that ensued, Iu** learned that his mistress had found a maternal protectress in the Empress on the very same day on which he had been hospitably taken in at Ha**'s house. The consent of the illustrious lady was asked by the lovers, and joyfully granted, and a rich dowry was allotted by the Empress to her adopted daughter —in lieu of which, however, the happy bridegroom begged the gift of the basket and linen in which she, who now made the happiness of his life, had first been cast helpless upon the world. He desired to preserve it for ever in his family as a memorial of his imperial benefactress.

Iu** is now a happy husband, father of a numerous family, counts his revenue by millions, and has depots of his immense tobacco manufactures in almost every large town in Germany— in Berlin amongst others. He lives in great style at St. Petersburg, does a splendid business, possesses estates, breeds cattle, and

owns ironworks; assists thousands of needy persons from his superfluity, but still modestly remains—"a Merchant of the Second Guild."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A RUSSIAN SECT.

IN barbarous lands, amongst jealous Mahometans, there still exists that revolting practice, which once was resorted to also in Italy, in order that the *blasé* ears of musical dilettanti might be enraptured by the shrill notes of masculine sopranos. The ridiculous prudery of the time kept women from the stage, and replaced them by unnatural caricatures. In Germany there died a few years ago, at Dresden, the last victim of that insane practice, a pensioned soprano of the royal concert room. Russia retains the melancholy distinction of possessing, amongst its unenlightened population, a mysterious and fanatical sect which imposes that dreadful condition upon its members, and combines, with mystical and unrevealed doctrines, the vilest greed of gain.

You enter the shop of a St. Petersburg money-changer, lay your money upon the counter, and inquire the rate of exchange. A cadaverous man with sunken eyes, thin hair, and beardless chin, approaches you with a stooping gait, and replies in a shrill and unpleasant treble. Your business transacted, he counts your money and gives you the value, in silence, with his eyes fixed upon the counter. As if he were ashamed of his voice, he never speaks but when obliged; if he is compelled to look you in the face, gaze at him steadfastly for a moment, and his eyes timidly seek the ground You have before you the *shadow* of a man.

This unhappy sect extends over all Russia, and all the money-changers belong to it. They are very rich, always bequeath their wealth to each other, and thus constitute a peculiar and despised money-aristocracy. Unwitting of connubial and paternal joys, they adopt those proselytes whom need, covetousness, or persuasion enlists in their ranks, and appoint them their heirs, binding them over to a

similar testamentary disposition. The law pursues such vile ensnarers with the utmost severity, and if caught *in flagranti* they do not escape the knout and Siberia; and yet—incredible though it seems—this sect rapidly increases.

As if the bodily mutilation also crippled their souls, they know none of life's purer joys. Mammon is their god; him they worship. Every other enjoyment is repugnant to them; shunned by every body, and excluded, partly by their own timidity, from all social intercourse, they lead a life of solitude, weariness, and disgust. And yet is their chief desire the increase of their sect; no sacrifice is too great, no danger too threatening, no bond of relationship too sacred; the whole strivings of their miserable existence are directed to the attainment of that wicked end.

A young, handsome, vigorous, and cheerful man was the brother of one of these—*money-changers.* A Russian by birth, he wore the whole of his well-grown beard, which flowed down upon his breast; fire sparkled in his eyes, nobility and dignity characterized his bold bearing and lofty stature. I used to see him at both the English and the Burgher clubs, at theatres and balls, riding and driving; the national costume, which became him admirably, was worn by him in a somewhat modernized form, indicative of taste and of the habits of good society. In short, his whole appearance betrayed the man of the world, possessed of a keen relish for life.

A journey into the interior of the empire removed me for some time from St. Petersburg. My first meeting with this man after my return was at the Burgher Club. What a change had taken place! The vigorous young man had shrunk suddenly into age and decreptitude; his bearing was languid and dejected, the fire of his eyes was extinct, his beard was gone—whether fallen out or shaven off, I cannot say. His dress was elegant, but worn with visible negligence; he held a newspaper in his hand, but his gaze wandered listlessly from it, and wine stood before him upon the table, but he drank it not.

"Look yonder at S——," said a friend to me. "Where?" I asked; "that man sitting there?" I dared not trust my eyes.

I accosted S——. He, formerly so vivacious, greeted me with utter indifference of manner; he poured out wine for me, and

I drank to him. In return, he scarcely touched the glass with his lips. He spoke little, and no longer with his former energy of expression, no longer in his clear, sonorous, tenor-tones. Soon he sat down again, and again took up the paper, again—not to read it. The impression he made upon me was most painful; I could not divest myself of the idea that I had before me a person in the last stage of sickness, and soon as I could civilly leave him I walked away.

Before leaving the club, I learned his melancholy history. Originally of slender means, he had fallen early into riotous society, and, led away by temperament and associates, he launched out into an extravagant course of life, and soon far outran his moderate income. After spending the interest, he squandered the capital, and, hurried away by the whirl of dissipation, he began to discount the inheritance he anticipated from his brother, who was excessively wealthy, a *money-changer*, and, consequently, without a family. Looking upon himself as his brother's sole heir, he made debts upon debts, until at last the clamour of his creditors compelled him to confess his position to his brother, and beg for help and assistance. The brother declared himself ready to pay his debts, to settle a handsome annuity upon him till the date of his own death, and to make him heir of all he possessed. But then he instantly damped the joy inspired by this declaration, by naming the condition on which he would fulfil it. With horror and disgust the young man loaded his unnatural brother with reproaches, and rushed from the house, determined never again to see him.

Meanwhile, every day added to S——'s embarrassments; mediating friends brought about a reconciliation between the brothers; the debts of the younger were paid, and the day was devoted to rejoicing.

After breakfast, the company got into two large three-horse sledges, and drove out a distance of eight versts, to the country-house of one of the party. They were seven in number; all *colleagues* of the elder brother. They sat drinking at the lonely country-house till late in the night. The elder brother and his friends drank sparingly; but took care to keep their young guest's glass constantly filled. As midnight approached, the previously gay conversation took a more serious tone. In the strongest terms the

elder brother represented to his junior the irregular life he was leading, painted its certain consequences and his future misery in the most vivid colours; then gave a pious direction to his expostulations and sought to envelope his former proposal in the garb of morality, Religious arguments were resorted to to overcome the young man's. repugnance; and, when all the arts of persuasion were found to be in vain, and no representation of future riches and happiness could appease his anger, or quell his opposition, *violence* was had recourse to. The victim was stricken with a raging fever; and, in the delirium that ensued, uttered furious threats of vengeance and accusation. But when he recovered, he was so debilitated both in body and in mind, and his energies were so subdued, that he abandoned the idea of revenge, and thenceforward dragged out a wretched existence, a sacrifice to the fanaticism of a few raging enthusiasts, the worst of whom was his own brother!

I was near being an eye-witness of a similar incident. My road, from my country-house at Kalomeja, to my dwelling in St. Petersburg took me late one night through the Balschoi-Mechansky (Great Mud-street), and past the Bank. Suddenly my droschki came up to a group of armed men. I recognised policemen and gendarmes, and observed some unusual commotion in a house on my left hand. I should have liked to investigate the occurreuce, but the schasneprice compelled my coachman to drive on.

The next day I learned that a gang of these fanatics had so worked upon the mind of a poor father of a family by making him brilliant promises in a moment of sore necessity, that they had at last prevailed upon him to subscribe to their tenets and form one of their sect. The master of the house, however, having his suspicions, had watched them, and had given information to the police, who had succeeded in catching the criminals in the very act. Those of them who survived their punishment, are now expiating their offence in the mines of Siberia; but the hope of rooting out, by such just severity, this senseless and unnatural crime, must be a vain one, since its perpetration is stimulated by a religious fanaticism which will only yield to increased enlightenment, and disappear only with the rudeness and superstition of the great masses of the Russian people.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DREAM.

HE who has never wandered on a summer night through the streets and squares of St. Petersburg; who has never contemplated that magnificent panorama in the gentle moonlight, when the nocturnal stillness is broken only by the murmurs of the soft-flowing Neva; he to whom the colossal statues, upon their immense pedestals, have never appeared, through the twilight of a northern night, like gigantic phantoms just risen from their graves,—let him not say that he has seen St. Petersburg.

Select such a night, and go forth to gaze upon the monuments of by-gone greatness. Spectre-like they pass before you, their steadfast eyes fixed upon the book of genuine and impartial history, to whose pages, impressed with adamantine and blood-red types, they point with iron fingers—alike to the inscription of undying fame, and to the record of infamy and crime!

It was on such a night that I returned alone from the country, and paused upon the half of the Troitzky Bridge. The centre portion of the bridge had been removed to let vessels pass through. This is always done at night in order not to impede by day the traffic over the bridge. I got out of the carriage, had myself ferried across, and continued my way on foot towards the interior of the city. Passing along the quay, and by the Winter Palace, I rambled slowly to the Summer Garden, and soon stood on the farther side of the canal, in front of that remarkable building, whose gratings, ditches, bridges, and palisades, betray the former fortress-like habitation of the Emperor Paul.

The palace is now occupied by the school of engineers. Opposite the façade, in the outer court, stands the equestrian statue of Peter the Great. It is of bronze: the attitude of the figure is quiet and easy; the horse is in an advancing attitude. The pedestal is of marble, adorned with very handsome bas-reliefs, and bears the simple inscription: "To the Grandsire, the Grandson." Paul I. had it erected in the year 1800.

In Northern Russia the summer nights, from the middle of May until the end of July, are almost as light as day. The quality of this nocturnal light is particularly favourable to the aspect of buildings and statues, whose beauty it seems to heighten by a sort of enchanted radiance. I sat down upon a bench, whence I had a front view of the statue. Glancing to the left, my attention was attracted by the walled-up window of the Emperor Paul's sleeping room, into which apartment, since his death, no human foot has entered, nor ray of light penetrated. Often, when passing by, had I looked up at that window, but never with such absorbing interest as at that moment; I sat gazing alternately at the "grandsire's" statue, and at the place of the "grandson's" death, until at last my thoughts grew confused, shadows hovered about me, and I fell asleep.

I had not slumbered long, when I was roused by a noise, as of footsteps and hollow murmurs. I opened my eyes, but could see nothing, for all was shrouded in profound darkness. Suddenly the pale moon emerged from behind the clouds, and I distinguished in my immediate vicinity a group of five men, in old fashioned uniforms, who, with pale countenances and uncertain gestures, whispered secretly together. Almost as soon as I discerned them, one of them perceived me; silently taking my arm, he led me away with him.

We walked softly across the court to the great staircase. It was lighted up. To our right hand, at the entrance of the first corridor, stood a grenadier on sentry. He presented arms, and let us pass. Now we turned into a side passage, at the extremity of which we found ourselves in a great hall. At its inner door stood a Cossack on guard. Before he could call out, one of my companions sprang upon him and drove a dagger into his left breast. Without a sound he sank upon the floor. The others strode across his body to the door; it was fastened, but a violent kick burst it open, and we entered a lighted chamber, where was a man who, as it seemed, had just awakened from a deep sleep, and who was stretching forth his hand to the bell-rope that hung beside his bed. One of my companions, who was attired in a rich uniform, sprang forward and with his bloody dagger cut the rope above the outstretched hand.

A momentary pause ensued; then one of the intruders approached the man in the bed, and held out to him, after a low and respectful obeisance, with the one hand an open document, with the other a pen wherewith to sign it. Thereupon the man sprang from his bed, attired only in his shirt, and with a single bound was in the middle of the room, when he assumed so lofty an attitude, whilst his countenance and bearing were so imposing and dignified, that the others for a moment timidly gave back. Now commenced a vehement discussion, of which I, ignorant of the Russian language, unfortunately understood nothing; I comprehended, however, that some hard condition was sought to be extorted from the person we had found in bed, for his countenance grew purple with fury, and when the murderer of the Cossack again approached him with paper and pen, he dealt him a blow in the face, which made him stagger three paces backwards.

At the same moment that this happened, I heard a tumult of an unmistakable character in the guardroom below. A mute spectator of this singular affair, I had retired into the embrasure of a window, whence I now looked out upon the courtyard. There I saw the officer of the guard (whom I at once recognised as him who had admitted the others over the drawbridge into the court, and had conducted me to the foot of the palace stairs) hurry to the sentry and give him some order. "Guard turn out!" immediately exclaimed the man. The officer drew his sword, drew up the guard under arms, and from that moment the men stood as if rooted to the ground, without moving a muscle, or uttering a murmur. Such is the character of the Russian soldier under arms.

Meanwhile the scene in the room above took another turn. Recovering from his momentary stupefaction, the officer who had been struck rushed upon his antagonist, and—*returned the blow!* Scarcely had his hand fallen upon the face of the half-naked man, when a panic fear seized all present; timidly dispersing, they hurried wildly towards the door. But he who had struck the daring blow was beforehand with them; erect, and with outstretched sword, he stood at the threshold, and warned them off with terrible words. Perhaps it was the excitement of the moment which led him involuntarily to use his native tongue, for what he said fell upon my ear in plain

German, with, if I mistook not, a *Hanoverian* accent. "Back!" he cried; "upon this threshold stands death. I have laid hands upon him; we are all lost—IF HE DOES NOT DIE!" Thrilled with horror, for a moment all stood like statues—then all trembled like the aspen leaf. My teeth chattered when I saw my countryman sheath his sword, unwind the sash from round his loins, and advance towards the nearly naked man. From that moment, the latter's mood seemed completely changed. His dignity had given way to fear, his bold defiance to abject terror; in lieu of commands he now poured forth prayers: his words and tones were no longer threatening, but supplicatory. A shudder came over me when I saw him clutch the paper and pen, and then, when these were snatched from him, sink upon his knees before his murderer. The majestic powerful man, who, a few moments before, seemed ready to defy the world, now crouched upon his knees, and sued, in piteous tone, for mercy and for life. It was too late. The man with the sash went up to him, and threw it in a noose around his neck. The others seized the two ends, and tugged hard at them. But in his deadly agony the naked man got his left hand through the noose, and drew it over his chin, so that it seemed impossible to strangle him. At the same time, with his right hand, and with the energy of despair, he defended himself against his adversaries, and struck one of them to the ground. Being a strong man, his stout resistance made it yet uncertain how the unequal contest might end, when suddenly his first assailant seized the heavy marble slab from off a dressing table, and brought it down with such violence upon the head of his victim, that he fell senseless to the ground, and stretched out his limbs upon the carpet—a dying man.

Hastily did the assassins now untwist the scarf from the neck of the corpse, which they then laid upon the bed, and rushed, as if hunted by furies, out of the apartments, down the stairs, across the court. The guard still stood under arms; *motionless as a wall.* Flying rather than running, we reached the drawbridge, and, at the very moment I was about to step upon it, the terrible "*Man of the Marble Slab*" approached me, and with his sword gave me so severe a cut across the forehead, that I was instantly deluged with blood.

I awoke: I was still seated upon the bench, upon which I had

fallen asleep; in front of me was Peter's statue; more to the left, the sleeping room of Paul. The sun's first beams were revivifying nature; and their warmth fell pleasantly upon my limbs, which were chilled and stiffened by the night dew. I had had a dream, but a terrible dream; that horrible scene, as it occurred in all its fearful reality, not as it has been misrepresented in Russian books of history, had been repeated, as I slept, before my affrighted eyes.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT.

THE colossal equestrian statue of Peter the Great, which stands in front of the senate house at St. Petersburg, is a magnificent monument of art, worthy of the great Catherine, and doing not less honour to her invention than to her high-minded recognition of foreign merit.

The hero of his country, mounted on a fiery steed, is here seen advancing, at full speed, along a rugged and unbeaten track, and crushing beneath the powerful tramp of his charger, the serpents that beset his path. Design and execution are alike grand, noble, and imposing. If certain small imperfections are to be detected in the work, these bear no sort of proportion to the remarkable excellence of the whole. I found the hand, which is extended (as if in benediction), somewhat stiff, the bust too long, and the thighs and legs too short. On the Roman tunic I will not pass judgment; it is in conformity with the corrupt taste of our times, and is certainly not so bad as our Schwerin, in Roman armour and sandals, and a modern periwig. These, after all, are only external faults, which do not impair the value of the whole. The horse is of remarkable beauty, and in every respect a masterpiece.

But whose pen could describe the beauty of the statue's head? At the very first glance one feels that it is a portrait. It has all that life-like and truthful character which can only result from the closest observation of nature. With that national character which is so un-

mistakably impressed on Peter's features, and with those outlines of the Sarmatian type, are combined a characteristic expression of power, energy, elevation, and majesty.

How could the artist succeed, so long after his model's death, in producing so striking a counterfeit, and in thus conveying the conviction of reality and resemblance whilst complying with the utmost demands of ennobling art?

One word solves the riddle. Love guided the chisel, in whose traces the sculptor followed.

A young Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Collot, a relative of Falconet the sculptor, since so celebrated, was also an artist, and resided for some time in St. Petersburg. The Czar saw some of her statuettes, and their expression of combined power and gentleness made so strong an impression on him, that he paid a visit, in strict incognito, to the artist's studio. There he made acquaintance with Mademoiselle Collot, and was captivated by her charms. The remarkable tenderness of her nature deeply impressed his stormy and passionate soul; the depth of her mind harmonised with his; a bond of sympathy speedily encircled them. Before she knew on whom she bestowed herself, the young Frenchwoman was Peter's mistress. During the most ardent period of their romantic love, he sat to her for his bust. The woman's tender affection combined with the artist's inspiration to produce the most perfect bust the world ever saw of one of its greatest men. What has become of that bust none know; but fact it is, that when Catherine II. conceived the idea of the grand equestrian statue I have described, and sent to Paris for Falconet to execute it, that sculptor made his studies for the head after the master-piece of his relative, Mademoiselle Collot, who at that time was doubtless dead. Cotemporaries, at least, who were acquainted with both works of art, declared the head of the statue to be an unmistakable copy of that inimitable bust, whose unparalleled beauty was wonderfully well reproduced in Falconet's colossal work. Truly! nothing was wanting to the memory of the northern giant, but that love should transmit his portrait to posterity.

Russian authors represent the *liaison* of the young Czar and the French lady as one that exercised much influence on the fate of the country. One writer says, that she was to Peter what the renowned

Corinthian was to *her* lover. Another calls her an adopted daughter of Falconet; but this is a manifest anachronism.

The gigantic statue stands upon a granite block of rare size, but which, nevertheless, is inferior in magnitude to the Empress's original idea. Not far from Wiburg, she had had dug out a gigantic block, which, with extraordinary difficulty, and by rolling it, had been transported to St. Petersburg. This block she ordered to be placed, rough and unhewn as it was, as pedestal for the statue, which was to typify pure natural power. The sculptor, however, set himself so obstinately against her wish in this respect, that she at last allowed the stone to be hewn. The idea was an unfortunate one, for the block lost, under the operation, much of its size and imposing grandeur, so much so, that when the statue was uncovered, Catherine, quite shocked at the diminution, exclaimed, "What has become of the great block?" and went away quite out of humour.

At that same moment she perceived a venerable looking old man, whose singular appearance fixed her attention. He was in the naval uniform of Peter's time, and had travelled from his distant home, defying the hardships of the long journey, to be present when honour should be done to his great leader, under whose command he had fought by land and by sea. Catherine spoke graciously to him, conferred upon him a considerable pension, and permission to appear at the palace whenever he pleased.

The inscription on the monument is quite characteristic of Catherine's concise and condensed style of writing:

"Petro Primo, Catharina Secunda!"

which is engraved on the front and back of the block—on the latter place, in the Russian language.

Absorbed in thoughts of the greatness of her illustrious model—perhaps, also, musing on her own—Catherine did not perceive the silly bit of flattery to which her courtiers had instigated the sculptor. This consisted in cutting Peter's name in small letters, and hers in far larger ones; thus defacing the worthy monument which the greatest woman of *her* time had erected to the greatest man of *his*. Such base adulation could only have excited disgust in her

high mind. It seems that, against the treacherous and venomous shafts of flattery, the greatness of a man, of a woman, and even of a granite block, is but an insufficient shield.

The same veneration for Peter prevails at the present day, as great in the Winter Palace as in the hut of the poorest Russian. The peasant contents himself with a little picture of him, before which he crosses himself, as before his saints; for the Emperor Nicholas, the statues already existing are not sufficient commemoration of his great ancestor's fame. The founder of St. Petersburg secured for himself immortality; but the present Czar takes pleasure in raising new monuments, which may personify to remote generations the memory of Peter and his descendant's gratitude. By his command there issued, in the year 1844, from the studio of the French sculptor Jaques, a fine statue, which now forms one of the chief ornaments of Cronstadt. It stands in the centre of a large open square hard by the port, and represents Peter in the dress he customarily wore, on foot, bareheaded, and in an attitude of reflection. The statue is colossal, full of expression, and the most characteristic of all those that I have had opportunity of seeing; it is also, to the best of my belief, the only one which shows Peter on foot and in the costume of his time. It has been repeated in innumerable little bronze and plaster of Paris casts, plenty of which I have seen in Germany. The adoption of the dress of the period is a testimony to improved taste. For ideal figures let Grecian nudity be always selected; for a portrait, resemblance and character are the main points: Frederick the Great represented, *à la* Louis XIV., in Roman armour and sandals, would be recognised by no Prussian as his adored "Old Fritz." A nation's heroes should be depicted with truth to nature and as they live in the people's memory.

The inauguration of Peter's statue at Cronstadt was attended with great pomp and circumstance. The Emperor and the whole Court repaired thither from Peterhof; the shipping had their colours hoisted, the whole harbour swarmed with gaily-decorated steamers, sailing-boats, and row-boats, conveying passengers from Petersburg to the festival; the river bank was covered with gay uniforms and elegantly attired women, and far away over the sea boomed the greeting of the cannon of the fortress, responded to by the guns of

the men-of-war. A religious ceremony consecrated the festival, and the universal joy indicated that the emperor's homage to the memory of his great ancestor had awakened the sympathy of the whole population. In the evening the city was illuminated, and loud above the hum of the multitudes that thronged the streets resounded two names, dear to every Russian—the names of Peter and Nicholas.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE POPE.

I HAD been on an excursion to Gatschina, and was about to get into my carriage to return to St. Petersburg, when I saw pass by a priest of about forty years of age. He was a handsome man, with an interesting physiognomy: what particularly struck me in his appearance was his profusion of hair. Anything so long and luxuriant as its growth I had never before seen, and I could not help gazing after him in wonder. The hair was of a chesnut-brown, naturally glossy, and fell waving in such abundance over his shoulders and down almost to his hips, that I could not but doubt whether it was all natural. I was still following him with my eyes, when he paused in front of an inn, looked back at me, and seemed uncertain which way to go. Suddenly he came to a decision, and approached me with a quick step. I delayed getting into the carriage. When he was close to me he looked hard at me, and, seeing at once I was a foreigner, he addressed me in excellent English, expressed his regret at having missed the diligence, and asked if by chance I was going to St. Petersburg. I replied in the affirmative, and offered him a place in my vehicle. He gratefully accepted, on condition that he should pay his share of the expense; a few more words were exchanged and we entered the carriage. As he had doubtless at once discovered from my broken English that he was mistaken as to my country, he now apologized for his error in excellent French, and when I told him that he was again mistaken,

and that I was a German, he continued the conversation in perfectly good German. With the exception of a slight accent, such as I was accustomed to in the Courland students at Leipsig, I observed nothing in the least foreign in his mode of expressing himself. I risked the supposition that he was half a countryman of mine, for I thought he was from the Baltic provinces, but learned, to my no small surprise, that he was from beyond Kasan.

There are no places where acquaintance is more quickly made than at the card-table and on the road. I soon got intimate with my priest, who was genial and communicative, and told me many things which, out of discretion, I should not have dared to inquire. At first we were conversing on general subjects, when the expression *vertrakt** escaped me. Without interrupting me he looked me steadfastly in the face, and seemed engrossed with something quite different from what I was talking about. When I ceased speaking, "*Pasluschi*" (my dear), he said, abruptly quitting the subject of the previous conversation, "pray repeat that word *vertrakt!*"

I repeated it, and asked what there was in it that struck him?

"I do not know the meaning of that word," he replied, "and only conjecture it from the connection of what you say; but I have heard the word once before in my life, and then, if I do not mistake, from *your* mouth. The tone of your voice struck me at once; I have heard you speak before to-day."

As I could not remember to have ever before met him, I named those places I was most accustomed to frequent.

"No, no!" he said, "not there!"

He again looked hard at me, and slowly repeated the word *vertrakt.*

"*Pasluschi!*" he suddenly exclaimed, "tell me, do you know the bookseller Curth or Leibrock?"

"Yes," replied I, "in the Newsky."

Thereupon he told me the day on which he had seen me there, heard me speak, and had his attention attracted by the word *vertrakt.* This opened the way to a fresh subject of conversation; from Leibrock, the bookseller, to literature, the transition was not

* Signifying *odd, strange.* It has other meanings, and is somewhat of a cant term.

very wide; but, the Rubicon once passed, how was it to be recrossed? and on the fields beyond it I did not feel altogther at my ease, for it is tolerably long since I made acquaintance with the Fathers of the Church, and it was no easy matter for me to recall them to my memory. But my embarrassment was of no long duration; my pope soon released me from it. With the acute perception of a connoisseur he quickly detected that I was not at home on this field, and led me to one more familiar to me; for to *him* no subject was untrodden ground. He spoke of politics, belles-lettres, journalism; and my surprise rose into astonishment when he introduced Tieck, Börne, and Heine into the conversation. Yes, still more than that, he was acquainted with George Sand's writings, and knew that she is Madame Dudevant. I did not conceal my astonishment.

"It surprises you," he said, "to meet with a Greek-Catholic priest to whom such worldly matters are not unfamiliar. Pasluschi! the surest road to heaven leads across the earth, and if at times one soils one's shoe-soles, then it is that one feels the most ardent desire for the wings that should bear him heavenwards. Man's best and highest study is that of man himself, and believe me that one often acquires a better knowledge of one's cotemporaries from a bad romance than from all the police-registers in the country."

"A bad romance," I replied, "signifies nothing: that which is but little read can afford no standard by which to form a judgment."

"Think you so?" said he, "I must disagree with you; the bad ones are those which are *most* read; as to the good ones, a great many people say they have read them who have never looked at them. But the bad ones are devoured, and it is not by the author, but by his readers, that I estimate the taste, the cultivation, and the morality of the people. Unhappily the readers of the present day exact neither depth nor truth; GLITTER is what they will have—glitter and that which dazzles! *that* is offered to them; *that* is what authors provide and readers greedily devour, and therefore are neither worth anything. Look at Eugene Sue's last work, as yet but half published; I have seen it only in the feuilleton of the *Débats*, but I would wager that, when the thing is complete, the publisher will sell a hundred thousand copies."

"The *thing!* Do you then think the work so bad?"

"Bad? No! that is not the word; it is a sort of stuff for which I have no name ready; lend me your "*vertrakt*:" judging from the manner in which I heard you apply it, that is, perhaps, the word that best expresses my view. Such a work, which glitters, but with false stones; which shines, but only from rottenness, like decayed wood; which is pleasing to the palate, but mortally poisonous; such a *vertraktes* (diabolical) work, which, under the mask of morality, corrupts all morals, plainly shows that the reading world is pretty well corrupted already, for otherwise no author would dare to write it."

"You will at any rate admit that the romance of the *Mystères de Paris* is based upon deeply moral views, and that it is the author's aim to lead us through vice to virtue."

"Oh yes, so long as we do not remain sticking in vice by the way. He first poisons us, and then hands us the chemical analysis of the poison; of which, however, we have then no need, since the pain in our vitals tells us, without the aid of science, the nature of the drug. Every work is *immoral* which irritates the senses by luxurious pictures, and *repulsive* when it then essays to cool them again by a flood of terror and disgust. Hypocrisy is at the bottom of the whole, or, at least, silly pretension and braggadocio. What business have these plans for the improvement of the world in the pages of romance? Romances have only to do with the state of the mind—with the *inward* man, in short; the description of his external circumstances should be subservient to the end of developing and explaining the motives and condition of his mind. But here just the contrary is done; a phantasmagoria is shown us which is intended as a representation of certain conditions of the human mind, when, in fact, it is nothing but a series of silly plans for social reform, based upon theories still more absurd. What business has all this nonsense about cellular prisons, coalitions of workmen, and other socialist stuff, in a romance, from whose volumes assuredly no statesman will think of gaining wisdom? If the author puts forward these views seriously, if they are founded upon real knowledge of the subject, and upon deep reflection, let him devote to them a serious and conclusive work; but let him not

stand up in the market-place and turn the heads of the mob by the propagation of half-digested theories, which the people, from selfish motives and want of judgment, will be much more prone practically to experimentalize than theoretically to investigate. And then, as to the style of such books! this mirror of a sensual exaltation stimulated almost to madness; this flowery patchwork, in which not one spark of truth is to be detected! I find it perfectly detestable. Montesquieu says, '*Le style c'est l'homme!*' If that be true, then do I greatly pity the French, for that style is an insane style, and all France is striving to make it its own."

The carriage stopped, and we alighted and went in to supper. Rarely have I been more surprised than I was to hear such discourse as this from the mouth of a Russian pope.

The inn at which we had alighted was of comfortable aspect. It was built after the fashion of our little Swiss houses; to the left it looked out upon a spacious court-yard, and was enclosed to the right by a tolerably extensive hedge, which suggested the idea of a pleasant garden. A neat, cleanly-dressed girl, about fifteen years old, received us at the door; as soon as she saw the priest, she ran up to him and held out her hand in a friendly manner, as to an old acquaintance; then she conducted us into the strangers' room, on the first floor. The stairs were very clean; the room we entered was not less so. Its walls were hung round with pictures of saints, some painted, others merely drawn. Some landscapes were also there; but only a very few were framed. The whole furniture consisted of a table, some wooden chairs, a mahogany press, and a large mirror, which hung between the two windows, below a portrait of the Emperor. My companion walked straight to the mirror, took a comb and brush from his pocket, and began to arrange his hair. "Excuse me," he said, "but we shall not reach St. Petersburg till very late, or rather very early, and I must not neglect my head-dress." I turned away, and busied myself looking at the pictures. There was no lack of bad drawing, but the colouring was lively, and the choice of tints showed taste. The landscapes, with their bold masses of foliage, their waterfalls and fields of ice, indicated a vivid appreciation and strict observation of nature. As works of art, however, none of them were of any value.

When I again turned to my companion, he had tightly bound up his thick mass of hair and twisted it round his head, and was in the act of pulling a small cap over it. Remarking my surprise at this singular head-dress for a man, he said good humouredly, "You will doubtless laugh at me, but I share this vanity with all my brotherhood: this is the only earthly ornament that we are permitted to wear, and by its abundance we compensate ourselves for all other privations in that respect."

"Indeed," I replied, "the remarkable growth of the hair of the Russian priesthood has often astonished me."

"There is nothing wonderful it it," said he; "anybody who devoted as much care and attention to his hair would attain the same end. As you now see, we every evening plait our hair as tight as possible, and braid it close round the head, and in the morning we comb and brush it for a long time, and with the utmost care; that promotes its growth, makes it flexible and soft, and causes it to flow down in light waves. But certainly it is not every body who has sufficient patience and perseverance. Allow me!"

He took my hand and laid it upon the plaits of his hair. They were firm and hard as ropes. Smiling, he again drew his cap over them.

Meanwhile, the hostess entered the room;—a woman somewhat over thirty, rather thin, with pallid, sunken features, but having in her bearing a certain decent grace and natural dignity. Her clothes were of country fashion, but very neat and cleanly. Without heeding me, she hastened to the priest, who embraced her, kissed her on the brow, and laid his hand gently upon her head. They conversed together with much animation; but all that I understood of their conversation was the oft-recurring "Pasluschi," the term by which the Russians usually address each other. I returned to the examination of the pictures.

When the hostess had left us, I fixed my eyes upon the priest. He seemed discomposed. To begin a conversation, I spoke of the pictures.

"They appear to be all by the same hand, I said, "and, although deficient in artistic skill, they show unmistakable talent."

"So it is," said the pope, with a bitter smile; "they furnish a remarkable document in relation to the usages of our times."

"How so?" I inquired, struck by his manner.

"It is a '*vertrakte*' history," he replied; "but here, in this close, dark room, I cannot speak of it. Let us go down into the garden; if you please, we can take our *sakusko* there."

At the top of the stairs we met the little girl who had received us at the inn door. She was bringing up the *samovar;* but now she turned back, and carried it into the garden, which she placed on a table, in a snug arbour; went away and presently returned with cheese, ham, and fruit.

"We shall not be able to stay here long," said my companion, as he prepared the *schei* (tea); the sky is heavy with clouds, and a storm seems coming on."

"You were about to explain to me," I said——

"Permit me first to drink a glass of *schei*," replied he; "to recall those sad memories in words would assuredly drive away my appetite."

He poured out the tea, filled the glass, cut a slice of lemon, added two spoonsful of rum, and presented it to me. Then he prepared a similar mixture for himself, tasted it, gradually emptied the glass, and resumed our previous subject of discourse.

"I know not," he said, "how far you, as a foreigner, are familiar with the laws, customs, and usages of our country. Should you be unacquainted with them, I should regret displaying them to you upon their most unfavorable side."

"We are all, in our degree, dependent on the supreme power in the State. In the higher classes, this despotism is veiled, partly by community of interest, partly by delicacy of form. It becomes less endurable in proportion as it descends through the inferior grades of the population, and attains the highest pitch of oppression in the lowest degree of the nation, in the relation of the serfs to their masters. There it prevails in a double form. Two things are equally to be dreaded by the serf,—namely, the love of cruelty and the cruelty of love. The first is the common lot of all slaves; they are treated slightly, and with contempt; they occupy the first place amongst domestic animals, their superiority to which

secures them no other privilege than that of being usually the first on whom the master's ill-humour vents itself. This, however, is the least unbearable condition of their existence. Knowing nothing better from the cradle to the grave, the old saying that 'custom is second nature' applies to them in all its beneficent force. The blind man is not annoyed by the glare of the sun; the insensible man feels no pain; true, that the former cannot enjoy the cheering radiance of the luminary, nor the latter experience the vivifying emotions of joy. But a slave must have neither eyes nor heart; for were they opened, how long would he be a slave? Therefore, does the *love of cruelty* maintain him in his brutalized state. *That* may be bearable! but the other thing—*the cruelty of love*—is not so. This latter shows itself in Russia in a form which, in your country and all other countries, so far as I have become acquainted with them by study, is not only unknown, but undreamed of."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SERF'S STORY.

"THE Russian, Sir," continued my companion "(and, believe me, I am inspired by no false patriotism; for I cannot love my country when its '*vertrakte*' laws have destroyed the whole happiness of my life), the Russian has the softest and tenderest heart of any in the world. Even you, who are a foreigner, may easily judge of that by his extraordinary affection for children, an affection unparalleled in any other country. Now, he who loves children has assuredly a tender and impressionable nature. But the misfortune here is that children do not for ever remain children. With their childhood disappears the love they have inspired, and the child who has been brought up by strangers as their own, lulled in a dream of security and affection, suddenly awakes, with all the feelings of manhood, and with a strong sense of its rights, to find himself a slave, a serf, degraded to the condition of a brute, and ten times more miserable than those of his class who, brutalized from their cradle upwards, have never known the worth and dignity of man.

"This '*cruelty of love*' frequently leads Russians of high family to take into their family, as so-called adopted children, unfortunate little creatures who have been so unfortunate as to attract their attention and rouse a fleeting interest. Their mode of adoption is this: they impose upon the infant all the duties of a child to its parents, without conceding to it in return any of the claims which such relationship would give it. They load it with the kindness, the love, the care of real parents, and bring it up as their own child, so long as a child it remains. From the day that their real condition is disclosed to such children, their future fate constantly impends over them, like the sword of Damocles, suspended by the silken thread of their master's caprice, which at any moment may annihilate them, or, which is still worse, *cripple* them for life.

"Such is the lot of those whose misfortune it is to awaken a master's cruel and capricious affection;—such was my terrible lot."

Visibly a prey to deep emotion, the priest paused for a moment, pressed his hand upon his forehead, and then, in calm and self-possessed tones, continued his narrative.

"My father was a serf, the son of a farmer on an estate near Kasan, and was permitted by the count, his master, to take service in the town, upon paying a yearly *abrok* or fine, in lieu of the labour he was bound to perform. He obtained employment in the household of a rich goldsmith, and there occupied his leisure in drawing, for which he had a natural taste. One day he surprised his employer by the exhibition of a beautiful arabesque design. The goldsmith, struck by his ability, released him from his menial duties, and took him as a pupil into his workshop, where his talent, backed by unwearying assiduity, soon converted the dull peasant into a highly skilled artist.

"He had reached his five and twentieth year, when his constant intercourse with his master's daughter, a charming girl of eighteen, resulted in an ardent mutual attachment. He asked her hand of her father, who, not unnaturally, annexed to his consent the one condition, that the serf should become a freeman. This condition could not be complied with. The count obstinately refused to liberate his vassal; all that entreaty could wring from him was the promise that, without absolute necessity, he would not withdraw him

from the town. This did not satisfy the old goldsmith; but he could not long resist his daughter's tears, and the lovers were united. A year of perfect happiness flew rapidly by; then came the war with France; my father's younger brother was taken for military service, his father died, and he himself was summoned by his owner to manage the now deserted farm. On his brother's return from the army he was to be at liberty to go back to Kasan. But his brother never returned, and the poor artist, the cunning worker in gold and silver, was condemned to follow the plough, whilst his freeborn wife sat beneath a serf's roof, nursing me, her infant son. In their sadly altered circumstances, I was my parents' only consolation. My mother's love and care delighted to adorn her 'jewel,' as she called me, with all the finery to which she had been used in her father's house. She passed her time in dressing and decorating me; and the fame of my beauty spread through the hamlet till it reached the ears of the countess, who desired to see me. My proud poor mother decked me out like a lamb for the sacrifice, and took me to the castle. The countess, who was passionately fond of children, found me charming, and declared her intention to do my parents the honour of adopting me. In vain my mother wept, implored, and raved in despair at the prospect of losing her son. I remained crying upon the countess's lap, my mother was forcibly turned out of the castle. Proud and happy had she entered it; humble, despairing, and with death in her heart, she turned her back upon its walls.

"I soon forgot what I had never properly known. My earliest recollections are of brilliant saloons, fine pictures, rich clothes, and of the room-full of playthings which engrossed my infantine attention. My foster-mother's affection richly compensated me for the love of those to whom I owed my being. Her husband I never knew. He died soon after my adoption, leaving two sons, one of whom was three years older than myself, the other one year my junior, and a daughter, twin sister of the youngest boy. With these, and with two adopted daughters, I grew up on a footing of perfect equality, receiving the same education, sharing all their sports and pleasures, until I attained my fifteenth year. At that period the countess's eldest son fell dangerously ill, and the physicians gave him up as lost. Then his despairing mother threw herself upon

his body, and made a vow to all the saints, that if he recovered she would devote her adopted children to the church. He did recover, and upon the day that he rose from his sick bed, we unfortunate victims were informed of our future lot. The two girls were sent to a convent; the elder of the two submitted to take the veil: the younger, Julinka, so obstinately refused it, that the *hegumena* (superior of the convent) sent her back to the countess. Furious at her refusal, the countess bestowed her in marriage upon a former gamekeeper, a somewhat dissolute fellow, who received leave of absence, on *abrok*, and took his young wife with him to Moscow. Thence, several years later, he went to St. Petersburg, and for a long time I heard nothing whatever concerning them.

"I had no taste for the priesthood; but what choice had I? A serf, and the son of a serf, obedience was my only passport to freedom. By consenting to take the vow, I at least secured my emancipation, for no serf can be a priest in Russia; so I yielded, and was sent to the Archimandrite at Kasan. I entered the convent with repugnance; only the fear of slavery could have driven me into it. Once there, however, I devoted myself ardently to study, and the pursuit of learning soon reconciled me to the profession thus forcibly imposed upon me. My zeal attracted the attention of my superiors; several learned monks admitted me to their society, and vouchsafed me their instruction. Unbounded as is the ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism of the great mass of rural popes, it is common to find in our convents a wonderful amount of learning, comprehending almost all branches of human knowledge. Amongst other inmates of the convent, which had become my prison, were two very learned monks from the Ukraine, a province which has always been noted as sending forth the best ministers of religion: even as, at the present time, it supplies Russia with the best singers and musicians. To the paternal affection of those two monks I am indebted for my education. I was ordained, and some time afterwards I was sent to Moscow. A few years ago I was summoned to the priests' seminary at St. Petersburg. After my installation there, I made an excursion, in order to become acquainted with the environs, and paused here, as we have done to-day, on my return from Gatschina. I was strangely moved at the sight of these pictures, some of which

represent scenes well known to my childhood; but how should I describe my astonishment at sight of the hostess, who entered the room to attend on me? Lapse of years, change of garb and condition, care and misery, had sadly altered her—not *so* altered her, however, as to prevent my recognising the playmate of my youth. With surprise and emotion I uttered the name, 'Julinka!' She looked up, gazed at me for a moment, and with a cry of delight threw herself into my arms."

That meeting with her adopted brother was Julinka's first moment of happiness for many years. Her husband had rented the tavern on the road to Gatschina, and passed his life hunting and drinking. She led a dull existence, occupied only by the routine of an inkeeper's business; her leisure hours she devoted to giving her daughter the best education she could, and at times, with her brushes and palette, she contrived to transport herself in imagination to the happier days of her youth. "Yonder pictures," she said, "are all unskilfully enough executed; but I do not paint because I *will*, but because I *must;* it is the last relic of my childhood. In God's good time there will be an end to all this; and when that day comes," she said to the priest, "I recommend Astafja to thy care."

Tears choked her utterance. I was deeply moved.

A dazzling flash of lightning illuminated the arbour, quickly succeeded by a violent thunder clap. The young girl came running out to us.

"Mother begs you to go in doors to supper," she said; "and quickly, for a terrible storm is coming on."

The pope arose from his seat, took my hand, and pressed it.

"May you find a good appetite for supper;" said he, "our *sakusko* has been melancholy enough."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

STORM AND WHIRLWIND.

WE entered the house just in time. A strong north wind whistled through the trees, and the rain fell in large drops. Flash succeeded flash, and one thunder-clap was heard before the echoes of its forerunner had died away. The innkeeper's daughter brought us some warm soup, which was very acceptable, for to the ardent heat of the day a sharp autumnal cold had suddenly succeeded. Whilst we sat down to table, the little girl lit a fire, whose blaze cheerily illuminated the room, already getting dark.

"The gentlemen," said she, in broken German, "will surely be obliged to pass the night here. It is getting a real *Samjots*. Were it but two months later, God help the travellers who should be out in it."

I asked my travelling companion the meaning of the word Samjots, which I had never before heard.

"The Russians," he replied, "divide storms into three classes. The least violent of these you to-day witness; it is called the Miatjel. As far as I can judge from what I have read on the subject, you are liable in Germany to weather as violent as this. The second, and severer sort of storm, occurs more rarely, and always in autumn or winter; it is the *samjots:* it is certainly dangerous; and woe-betide the traveller who finds himself exposed to its fury on an open country road. Escape from it is out of the question. The driving shower of snow renders it an impossibility to keep the eyes open, and no horse will advance a step, flog and spur as you may. The best and only possible means of safety is to throw yourself flat on the ground, and let yourself be snowed over, especially if you can reach the shelter of some little elevation which prevents the wind from getting a hold of you; otherwise it takes you up with irresistible force, and whirls you like a feather in the air."

"Gracious heavens!" I exclaimed, "what a climate! and is one often exposed in this country to such agreeable surprises?"

"Less here," was the reply, "than in Eastern Russia: but the

Samjots, terrible though it be, is a mere shadow of the *Winga:* the former it is *possible* to survive: in a house you are tolerably secure from its effects; by tying yourself to a tree you may weather it with life: a large number of men or beasts travelling together, a caravan or barricade of vehicles *sometimes* withstands it. But *nothing* withstands the Winga."

"In heaven's name," cried I, "what then is the Winga?"

"A prelude to the Last Day," answered the priest. "Fortunately, unmistakable indications announce its coming for some days beforehand. Then nobody sets out upon a journey, not even to the next village, though it be but a verst or two off. Precautions are taken for the safety of the house, by protecting it, on the north side with heavy stones, and by propping it up, as well as barns and stables, on the south side. The *tabunen* (troops of wild horses) scamper in all haste to the nearest forest; droves of cattle and flocks of sheep seek shelter wherever it is to be found. Whatever the storm overtakes upon the open plain, man or beast, caravans drawn by oxen, or caravans drawn by horses, is lost without a chance of rescue.

"An icy shower of snow is the forerunner of the terrible blast; it falls so thick, and drives so horizontally through the air, that to withstand it is impossible, whilst it avails little to suffer one's-self to be driven before it. For if one escapes for awhile this prelude to the hurricane, one is infallibly overtaken by the formidable blasts and circling whirlwinds which succeed it, and which gather up from the earth, like chaff from the threshing floor, the objects exposed to their violence, and hurl them to and fro in the air. And yet the rage of the unfettered element is not here at its height; for when the storm seems to have exhausted its fury in the manner I have described—often raging thus during a period of several days—then first begins the real tempest, a blast which *nothing* can resist. It uproots whole forests, tosses the loftiest fir trees into the air like blades of straw, and often conveys them, high above the earth, whole versts away. It levels stables and barns, unroofs houses, and throws down church towers, so that the district it has visited looks, after its destructive passage, and for distances of several days' journey, like a land ravaged by fire and sword. On all sides are seen

herds of dead cattle, trees uprooted, villages overthrown. In exposed situations, this wind has been known to tear up isolated stables, to transport through the air their fragments and the cattle they contained, and far, far from the spot, to hurl these down shattered upon fields and roofs. With varying fury the monster rages for some days, leaving behind him, on his departure, death, destruction, and lamentations. Happily he comes but seldom; his visits are not for every generation: but when he does come, all that his icy breath touches is devoted to annihilation.

"That is the Russian *Winga!*"

I looked with astonishment at the speaker, and doubtless my looks betrayed my incredulity.

"I comprehend your doubts," he said. "You are born in a climate in which the wonders of ours sound like fables fit for children, and I cannot be surprised at your want of faith: I myself, to whom the natural phenomena of our zone are more familiar, held the account I had heard of the Winga to be a mere tradition, until personal experience convinced me that it was within the limits of possibility. On a journey from Kasan to Azov, I encountered a storm which I should unhesitatingly set down as the *Winga*, had I not been assured by better informed persons that I had experienced only the *Samjots;* but from the frightful power with which it raged, I could in some degree estimate the irresistible might to which the element attains when it comes forth in the character of the Winga."

I begged the priest to give me a brief description of the storm he had encountered.

"It is now twelve years ago," he said, "that the Archimandrite of Kasan purchased some old manuscripts from an antiquary at Nischni Nowgorod. The antiquary had bought them at one of the great fairs, of which three are annually held at Taganrog, from a Persian who habitually attended those fairs. As the manuscripts were found, upon minute examination, to be of importance, I was sent to Azov to the next fair, which was to take place at the end of October. The Persian, we had ascertained, was in the habit of arriving at Azov some time before the commencement of the fair, and thence, after transacting business, he proceeded to Taganrog, which is only seven and twenty versts (about eighteen English miles) from

Azov. I joined a caravan bound for Taganrog, and reached that port without accident or adventure. The next morning I ascended to the citadel, to contemplate that remarkable district. It was a beautiful autumn day, and the strong east wind, steadily blowing, had wrought one of those marvels which it taxes your faith to believe. Taganrog, situated on the sea, now looked over a dry basin; the east wind had driven the sea miles backward, so that the same afternoon we drove across the bed of the waters to Azov, performing the distance in two hours, and, as once the Jews through the Red Sea, reaching the opposite shore dryfoot. From a distance the aspect of the town was imposing enough; but on nearer approach, the illusion was soon dissipated. Half-ruined fortifications, enclosing houses of a very poor description, compose this town, which enjoys so great a reputation. Only to its position, and to its importance as a strategical point, is it indebted for a certain degree of consideration, which is greatly impaired on sight of the place. Next to the remains of the Turkish walls, the most interesting object is an old rampart beyond the river, which Peter the Great threw up at the time of the siege.

"At Azov I put up at the place that had been pointed out to me, and, to my no small joy, the Persian merchant from Teheran not only made his appearance at the time he was expected, but brought with him several Persian books and manuscripts, to the examination of which I immediately and zealously applied myself. The study of these time-stained parchments did not, however, prevent me from keeping an observant eye on what was passing around me, and thus I often visited Taganrog, when the fair there was in full activity. This fair was protracted by the persevering east wind, which prevented ships from coming in; and twice more did I cross the bed of the sea in a britschka drawn by two little horses. The last time, however, we narrowly escaped with our lives, and only in consequence of the almost incredible swiftness of our horses. We still had six or eight versts to get over before reaching the shore, when the wind suddenly chopped round and drove the water with such power and rapidity into the bay that many vehicles which could not get away fast enough were overtaken by the flood, and, although boats hastened to the rescue, several persons were drowned.

On the afternoon of the same day thousands of vessels came running in with sails spread, covering the sea as far as the eye could reach. I never saw a more impressive scene. Now the bustle in the streets wonderfully increased. Even in Nijni-Nowgorod, whose fair is the most celebrated in the world, I never saw such a congregation of human beings. Russian and French, Hungarians and Greeks, English and Tartars, Swedes and Cossacks, Italians and Armenians, were mingled in motley multitudes; Calmucks, too, were seen roaming through the streets, hanging like drunken men upon their horses, and followed by their wives—also on horseback, and better mounted and far better riders than their husbands. On an immense open square where unloaded waggons, from the Ukraine alone, were collected together, I counted, one afternoon, upwards of 5000 vehicles. To these were to be added several thousand ships, busily loading and unloading, and some hundreds of smaller craft, which came across the Black Sea from Sinope and Trebisond, laden with preserved grapes, spikenard, and with a sort of syrup called *beckmiss*, prepared from various fruits boiled with honey. I also witnessed the landing of innumerable casks of dried grapes, out of which is made excellent brandy. The traffic which here goes on in precious stones, shawls, silk stuffs, wine, fruit, grain furs, linen, tobacco, iron, hemp, &c., is inconceivably great. I was surprised to find that the enormous masses of copper which came over from Trebisond were destined almost exclusively for Moscow and that the mountains of sea-fish which the sea of Azov yields were all sent to Southern Russia, that is to say northwards from Taganrog.

"More than once I was overtaken by darkness on my visits to Taganrog, and forced to pass the night there. On these occasions I was indebted for a bed to the kindness of my Persian friend, who gave me one in his lodging, for the town was crammed and not a nook to be had. During the fair, rents are so high that my host paid for that short period of time, for a very modest dwelling, 500 paper rubles (about 20*l.* sterling). If we call to mind, however, that the trade, and the consequent affluence of people, extends over but three months in the whole year, we cannot much wonder

at the dearness of lodgings and provisions, of which latter there was no scarcity.

"The fair was over, and I had completed my hasty examination of books and manuscripts. Selecting what appeared to me the most desirable amongst them, I soon made my bargain with the Persian. The well-packed box was delivered to a commercial caravan starting for Moscow, and I attached myself to a lighter one, the vehicles composing which were drawn by horses, and which was bound for Orenburg by way of Saratow.

"It was at the commencement of the second week in November that we started from Taganrog, on a fine mild autumn day, passed the Don at Nowo-Tscherkask, and safely reached Sarepta. Here we crossed the Wolga and continued our rapid and cheerful journey in the neighbourhood of that river, when, on the third day, at about ten o'clock in the forenoon, the sky became so dark that we could scarcely see rifle-shot distance before us. At the same time the wind changed, and a cutting north-easter met us. This had not lasted long when there fell a thick shower of snow, a cutting blast whistled round the horses, the road was no longer visible, and the utmost consternation seized the whole caravan. We shouted to each other, but, owing to the howling of the storm, not a word could be heard. At last the foremost halted; we drew up in two ranks, assembled, and took counsel. It was decided to remain for a while upon that spot and quietly to await the conclusion of the storm.

"'Such a *miatjel* as this,' said one of the travellers, 'it was never my lot to witness.'

"'If it were nothing worse than that,' said an old groom who held his horses' reins with a trembling grasp; 'but I fear, I greatly fear, that it is the *samjots*.'

"'What next!' cried some of the travellers, whilst others grew pale at the words; 'the samjots gives warning of its coming several days beforehand.'

"'Not always,' replied the man; 'and, besides, who knows whether it has not already given such notice hereabouts? We come from afar. May the Holy Mother of Kasan protect us!'

"He crossed himself, and turned away to his horses. Mean-

while, the storm continued to rage, but the snow diminished a little, and we endeavoured to proceed on our way, now most laborious. We could see no road, nor tell where we were; nor could we even guide ourselves by the wind, which changed every moment, scaring and dispersing the caravan. We had gone a league, perhaps, in this manner, when we thought we saw huts in the distance. We approached them, and were already within a hundred paces of the place, which appeared to be a village, when there arose upon the sudden so awful a tempest, combined with continuous whirlwinds, and with driving clouds of snow, that we were literally unable to open our eyes. The peasant who was driving us threw the reins on his horse's neck, crept into the britschka to us, and drew his sheepskin over his eyes. My travelling companion and I had long done the same thing; and in this manner, holding fast by the sides of the vehicle, in order not to be carried away by the storm, we abandoned ourselves to our fate, and were driven whithersoever the wind pleased. Before long, I felt a violent shock—the carriage was overturned; apparently we had fallen into a ditch. I was about to rise, when the peasant clutched my caftan, which the storm was already seizing, and dragged me and my other fellow-sufferer down into the ditch. Here we were in some degree sheltered from the wind. We laid ourselves as close together as we could, and drew our caftans over our heads. The storm raged furiously, and the cold was so bitter that I feared to be frozen to death. This sensation did not, however, last long; the cold that stiffened my limbs gradually diminished, and was at last replaced by an agreeable warmth which pervaded my whole frame. Thus I lay, in a state of semi-unconsciousness, and at last it seemed to me that I was in bed, in a well-heated room, and heard without the surging of the ocean, or the distant howling of a storm. Soon my senses entirely left me, and I sank into a deep sleep.

"I was awakened by footsteps upon my body. Still half-asleep, I raised myself up, and would have thrown the covers from off my head; but my hands passed through them, and I was not quit of my covering. Help now came from without; two hands seized my arm; I stood up with difficulty, and gradually crept from under the snow blanket, a foot thick, which lay over me. Little

by little, consciousness returned; I remembered what had passed, and recognised my travelling-companions, who stood beside me in great good-humour, and with them two Calmucks, who, happening to pass by, had observed the horses and the overturned carriage, and easily conjectured what had taken place. They had searched the ditch, and at last had awakened its occupants out of their sweet sleep, by treading upon them. It was already dark. We had passed about four-and-twenty hours in this most primitive bed. Saved we were; but what was now to be done? The carriage was broken; the horses lay powerless upon the ground. My companion, a merchant from Saratow, was fortunately quite competent to converse with the Calmucks. He had had much intercourse and various commercial transactions with that people, and advised me to throw myself, without hesitation or apprehension, upon the hospitality of the horde, whose camp was near at hand. So we set to work, and got the horses on their legs, and the britschka in motion, as well as we could, and followed our silent guide to the Calmuck tents.

"That was the end of our perilous adventure; and now you have some idea of what the *samjots* is."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MOON OF THE MOUNTAINS.

THE storm had ceased, the moon had emerged from behind the clouds, and our driver summoned us to continue our journey. We took leave of our interesting hostess, and got into the carriage. I begged my friendly companion to narrate to me the sequel of his journey, and to tell me something of what he saw during his stay with the Calmucks—they being a people who, to our imaginations, are shrouded in a sort of semi-fabulous obscurity.

"'Willingly would I do so," he replied; "and as I was obliged to pass several days amongst them, and availed myself of that time to investigate their customs, manners, and state of mental cultiva-

tion, I should be able to tell you much about them which would certainly astonish you, disposed as you are to consider them a sort of half-fabulous race. If, however, you seriously desire to get some insight into the pursuits and poetry of that singular race of men, you have only to honour me with a visit: my journal shall be open to you; and I flatter myself that many of its pages will be so fortunate as to excite your interest and sympathy."

"I gladly accept your invitation," I replied, "and should greatly value it, even though there were no journal in the case. That there is one, however, makes me doubly prize your kind offer, for I am most curious to know more of the Calmucks and their pursuits. As to their *poetry*, I willingly dispense with hearing anything about it."

"Do not laugh at it," answered the pope, "it is that very portion of my account of the Calmucks that will most excite your surprise and wonder. The Calmucks have no regular literature, but they have religious books and collections of laws; they have their written history, albeit somewhat irregular, and their poetry is not so poor as you think."

"Poetry!" I cried in astonishment; "Calmuck poetry?"

"Certainly," he replied, "and a highly original and natural poetry, in which are often to be detected flights of fancy, a depth of feeling, and a pregnancy of thought, which I sadly miss in many of the much-belauded modern poets of nations who boast themselves to be on the pinnacle of civilization."

"Calmuck poetry!" I repeated, too much surprised to get beyond those two words.

"Certainly," he continued, "only you must not expect fine modern works, elegantly got up and illustrated. The poetical effusions of this nomadic race are of a purely rhapsodical nature. They have their minstrels, like the Scots of old; and if their songs are inferior in delicacy and elegance to those of the Provençal troubadours, you will perhaps find some compensation in their expression of thorough nationality, and in the fresh outpouring of a completely inartificial nature. I had opportunities of hearing them sing many such songs. With the assistance of my travelling companion I translated them into my native tongue; and if it would really in-

terest you, I would with pleasure translate for you into German those chapters of my journal which relate to the Calmucks. You must make allowances for my unpractised pen, and if you call upon me in a week's time you may expect to find the Calmuck poetry ready. And, after making better acquaintance with my former hospitable hosts, I hope to hear you heartily ask pardon for your incredulity."

"I will not fail," I replied; "and I confess that my curiosity has seldom been so much excited about anything as about this new literature, which I certainly never dreamed of becoming acquainted with through so authentic a channel. I have met with many rare and unexpected treasures in St. Petersburg, but I was not prepared to fall in with gems of Calmuck literature."

"In gems of many kinds Russia is by no means poor," said the pope, "but unfortunately they are in the habit of showing to strangers only those which are polished, and whose sparkle and lustre may excite their admiration; that which does not make a show is here little prized, and so the people think to do foreigners no pleasure by exhibiting it. I will wager that the very first thing of all that they took you to see was the Moon of the Mountains."

"The Moon of the Mountains!" I exclaimed; "what is that?"

"Then you have not yet been to the Hermitage?"

"Indeed I have."

"And did not see the Crown-jewels?"

"Yes, yes," replied I; "I saw crown, sceptre, imperial globe, and all the rest of it, and was, I must admit, astonished at the extraordinary splendour of the precious stones. Above all, a diamond in the sceptre made a great impression on me. I never beheld anything to equal it for size and purity. But, to return to your text, what has that to do with the Moon of the Mountains?"

"Much!" he answered, "for that is the name of the diamond in question, whose equal assuredly is hardly to be found in Europe. Its size and splendour must strike every one, but for connoisseurs it is of incalculable value. The name of its first possessor is unknown; and on that score the wildest tales circulate. Several old manuscripts affirm that this resplendent jewel was once an eye of the statue of the Great Lama in India; but this may very well be meant

metaphorically to indicate its great lucidity and extraordinarily pure water. Fact it is that the celebrated Thamas Kuli-Chan—after he, who sprang from the lower classes of the people (history calls him a shepherd's son), had raised himself to the throne of Persia and assumed the title of Nadir-Shah—enriched his treasures with diamonds of the rarest beauty. Prominent amongst these were two stones whose equals the world never beheld. On that account one of them was called the Ocean Sun, the other the Moon of the Mountains. Towards the end of a reign which innumerable heroic deeds had illustrated, Nadir-Shah's naturally irritable temper betrayed him into the commission of all manner of cruelties. Their consequences were several insurrections, which led him on to still more frightful deeds, until he had the eyes of a beloved son torn out, and was brought to the brink of insanity by remorse and despair. At last, hard pressed by insurgents, he sent against them an army commanded by his nephew, Ali-Kuli-Chan. But this nephew joined the rebels, unfurled the banner of independence, and prepared to give battle to Nadir-Shah. With a veteran army Nadir advanced to meet him; but, before doing so, he sent his sons and his most precious jewels, under escort of Nasralla Mirza, to the strong fortress of Kelat, whose impregnability appeared to him beyond a doubt. He himself took his station at the head of his army, and, on the night of Sunday, the 11th of the Gemadi' lakhri, 1160 of the Hegira (8th June 1747), he encamped at the station of Fathabad, two parasangs from Khabushan.

"Here his destiny overtook him. In the night, with consent of his nephew, three assassins fell upon him in his tent, and separated from his body that glorious head, at whose frown all Asia so long had trembled. On news of this event the insurrection became general, the army went over to the insurgents, the strong fortresses were surrendered or stormed, all the members of Nadir-Shah's family were killed, and for a time pillage and murder, fanned by revenge, raged uncontrolled throughout the land. All the fortresses had fallen, except the castle of Kelat, whose fortifications guaranteed it from capture, and which on that account was considered one of the wonders of the world. Accident brought to pass what force never would have achieved. The guard of one of the towers of

Kelat, wanting to fetch water, let down a ladder, which was seized by the enemy, who happened at that very moment to come up. Thus was the tower scaled, and a terrible butchery ensued within the walls of the fortress; the princes fled, were pursued, overtaken, and all were executed except the youngest, Sghahrokh, on whom Ali-Kuli-Chan had certain ulterior views, and whom he kept in close confinement, whilst he himself, on the 25th of the same month, ascended the throne of Khorasan as Ali-Shah. This done, he had the vast treasures of Nadir conveyed from the castle of Kelat to his capital Meschehed. The rich store had been despoiled of many a precious valuable; Ali's prodigality heeded not their loss: but it was found on examination that the Moon of the Mountains was missing!! To recover that matchless jewel no pains or promises were spared, but it was irretrievably lost.

"About that time there dwelt in Bassora a merchant who had three brothers, and whose name was Schafrass, but who was habitually known only as the *millionschick*, or possessor of millions. One day an Afghan chief came to this man, offered him several brilliants for sale, and amongst others the Moon of the Mountains. The price demanded, although considerable, seemed to the merchant far below the value of the object, but nevertheless, before concluding the purchase, he desired to consult his brothers; moreover, he had not by him so large a sum in cash, and, in short, he demanded time to consider the proposal made him. The Afghan seemed suspicious and uneasy, but consented to the delay. When the brothers had agreed to buy the diamond, they sought for the stranger: he had disappeared. Fear of discovery had doubtless driven him away. Now that the prize had escaped them, the brothers eagerly desired it; they followed the traces of the Afghan, and at last found him at Bagdad. A bargain was soon concluded, and the Moon of the Mountains passed into possession of the brothers Schafrass. But now the difficulty was to realize the treasure. The brothers agreed to observe the strictest silence concerning it, hid the diamond, and for a time did not dare to leave Bassora, lest they should arouse suspicion. Not until twelve years later did Schafrass venture to undertake a long journey, reached Amsterdam, and there, for the first time, offered the diamond for sale. The Crown of England was

very near obtaining it, when the Russian court made proposals to the owner. He was invited to take his treasure to St. Petersburg for inspection—compensation for his trouble being guaranteed to him—and there its purchase was at last effected, on very unusual conditions. By the intervention of Count Gregory Orloff, Schafrass and his brothers received letters of nobility, and 400,000 rubles in cash. The new nobles then left Bassora, and purchased property in and near Astracan, where descendants of theirs still reside. The diamond had a place allotted to it on the sceptre of the Empress Elizabeth.

"That is the true history of the 'Moon of the Mountains.'"

The carriage stopped. We were in St. Petersburg, and in front of the Alexander Newsky convent. With a hearty shaking of hands we parted for awhile; the pope entered his convent, and I returned home.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JUSTICE AND POLICE.

RUSSIA is the country of contradictions; the writer who describes it without mentioning these, has only observed one side of his subject, and has overlooked its most characteristic feature. The proverb that extremes meet, is nowhere more frequently justified than here, and from this constant meeting naturally arises a mass of contrasts and contradictions.

If one speaks of the Russian climate, you involuntarily shiver, and draw nearer to the fire—and you are right; but when I affirm that I have suffered less from heat in Italy, and more from frost at Avignon, than in St. Petersburg, I speak the truth, and am also right; but you are not on that account in the wrong. The contrast consists in the climate; consists in the extremes which meet in Russia, and which meeting is also to be noted in the national character, customs, manners, in the laws and in their execution. If you tell me that the Russian has something of the wild beast in his composition, I shall not say that you are in the wrong; but neither can you accuse me of misstatement when I assert, that in social intercourse he is amiable, gallant, and delicate. We are both in the

right: we may agree that he holds out his hand to us with German frankness, presses ours with the courteous cordiality of a Frenchman, and with fingers velvety as a tiger's paw, but from which, as in the case of the tiger, the claws sometimes suddenly protrude. To put the case in two words—the Russian's breeding is in opposition with his original nature, and the struggle between the two engenders perpetual contradictions.

The summer day is of heavenly beauty; its only drawback is that the heat is too oppressive: at six o'clock you are longing for a puff of fresh air, that you may breathe freely—at seven you crouch shivering beside a blazing fire. Was the day, therefore, not beautiful, and are there not many days which are fine for the whole of their four and twenty hours? for in the height of summer there are full six weeks when one does not know at St. Petersburg what night is.

You have a servant, true as gold and sober as a dervise. For three months not a fault has been found with him; at the end of that time thirst overtakes him, and he is drunk for eight days—literally for eight whole days.* This over, for three or four months nothing will induce him to touch strong drink. Are such contradictions conceivable? And yet they exist.

Look at the Russian *muschik!* He disgusts you to behold, and yet he is the cleanest man in the world; he is covered with dirt, and yet the correspondent lies who wrote to the Cologne Gazette that in Russia "the soldiers are driven like cattle to the bath, that being the only means by which their proximity is rendered endurable," and so forth. The correspondent may have seen the Russian soldier dirty, *that* I admit, and certainly it is not everybody's affair to investigate things minutely: the *muschik*, who works for nine months of the year in his sheepskin, and wears the same skin often for ten years or more, exposed in it to all weathers, and leaving upon it the traces of his occupation—he, I say, certainly cannot be as trim and neat as a ballet-dancer; and the same might doubtless be the case with the troops whom the correspondent saw upon their march back from Hungary, who also may possibly, for the sake of order, have been marched by detachments or corps to the bath under guidance

* The Russian considers this a sort of disease, and gives it a particular name, which has escaped my memory.—*Author's note.*

of a non-commissioned officer. All this I grant. But what I affirm and maintain is this: give the Russian soldier no meat for a month and he will not murmur; put him for three months on half rations, he bears the privation uncomplainingly; but, upon the other hand, only deprive him for a month of the two baths which he is accustomed to take every week, and he will grow discontented, useless, sick; for nature and habit imperiously demand this cleanliness of his body, however unspeakable may be the dirt of his garments which circumstances entail. There again you have the extremes meeting.

The Russian laws are for the most part wise; many of them are very humane, above all they are very just, and yet in the whole world no such scandalous injustice occurs, no such atrocious abuses of power are witnessed, as in Russia; in no other country is the administration of justice and police worse than there. The fault is not with the laws, but with those who execute them. Whoever has had opportunities of becoming acquainted with Russian justice and police, will assuredly not complain of the abuse of the lash in that country; much more likely will he be to deplore that it is so little laid on, and, especially, that it is so seldom applied in the right place. Russian corruption is unfortunately no fable. The man who has money enough, who knows the paths, and does not shrink from treading them, may there gain all his ends.

I do not mean to say that the judgment of a tribunal is purchasable; I know no example of this, nor do I believe it; but what I *can* testify to is the occurrence of cases where the parties concerned could not get the legal judgment expedited. Thus the decision in their favour was virtually useless, and all applications were for years ineffectual, until a golden key at last opened the archives in which, beneath a thick layer of dust, reposed the much desired documents.*

The police are ten times worse. Against their activity nothing is to be said, and they are quick at discovering thefts; but so great is their faculty of retention, that a person who has been robbed never considers his chance of recovering his property so small as when the police have detected the thief. From the thief's hands

* Vide *ante*, Chapter XII.

he deems it possible he may get back his own, but from the clutches of the authorities—never. So strong and universal is this feeling, that robberies would seldom be reported, did not the laws, in the interest of public security, render such report compulsory. I must give a few cases, which I can vouch for as having really occurred. A Courland nobleman, Mr. Von H., lost some silver spoons, knives and forks, stolen out of his plate-chest. Some weeks afterwards one of his servants came rejoicing to him; he had found the stolen goods; they were openly exposed for sale in a silversmith's shop window Mr. H. went to the window, recognised his property took a police officer with him, and made the silversmith show them the plate. His arms and initials were upon it; the dealer admitted he had bought it of a stranger, and offered to restore it to its rightful owner. Mr. H. would have taken away his property, but the lieutenant of police forbade that, drew up a formal statement of the affair, and requested Mr. H., as a proof that the plate was his, to send to the police some other article out of the chest to which he affirmed it to belong. Mr. H. sent the whole case, with its contents, to the police bureau. He never saw either of them again.

I had this story from Mr. Von H. himself, and I repeated it to a physician, a friend of mine, whom I thought very much to astonish. Astonished he certainly was; not, however, at the rascality of the police, but at the simplicity of Mr. H., who ought to have known them far too well to have trusted them with his plate chest. The St. Petersburg thieves are exceedingly skilful and daring. The doctor, too, had his tale to tell. He wanted a coachman; one applied for the place just as his droschki happened to be at the door, and, by the doctor's desire, he drove up and down the street, to give a specimen of his skill, which was satisfactory. The doctor called to him to come up stairs, and sat down to dinner. The man did not appear; inquiry was made; he had driven away the horse and carriage, and was nowhere to be found. The doctor made his report to the police, as in duty bound, but at the same time made a formal declaration that he renounced all claim to the stolen property, and declined taking it back again. The precaution was most judicious. He could not do without a vehicle, so bought another the same day, and when the police, six weeks afterwards, brought him

back horse and droschki, they were in so wretched a state, and the charges so enormous, that he was heartily glad to have it in his power to decline receiving his property, or paying the costs.

In a small way, I myself had some personal experience of this kind of thing. A silver tablespoon was stolen out of my kitchen. I had my suspicions, stated the case to the police, and on the very same day the thief was discovered. It was a journeyman baker, who brought us bread, who had taken the spoon, and sold it to a stall-keeper on the Schukingdwor. The thief was duly punished, the receiver's shop was closed, and my spoon was taken to the police. It was worth a ducat at most; but it was a christening gift to my child, and on that account I valued it, and spared no pains to recover it.

Pains it certainly cost me. I was referred from one person to another, and at last the commissary, in whose custody the spoon was, asked me frankly why I was so persevering about such a trifle; I had spent more money in coaches, he said, than the thing was worth, and I was likely to spend twice as much more before recovering it, for there were still many obstacles to its being given up.

"To-day," I replied, "all those obstacles will be surmounted, and to-morrow I shall have the spoon."

"The devil you will!" quoth the guardian of public order and security. "May I beg to know how you propose to manage that?"

"Very easily," I replied; "and to show you how certain I am of what I advance, I now make you a present of the spoon, and am nevertheless persuaded that to-morrow you yourself will call and return it to me."

The *schasneprice* laughed till he was fain to hold his sides.

"Capital!" he cried; "before your complaint comes round to me, a fortnight or more will elapse."

"Yes," I replied, also laughing, "were I such a fool as to make a complaint, which, moreover, I have now no right to do, having made you a present of the spoon. But it so happens that I dine to-day with Perowsky; and over the dessert I will propose to the minister this curious riddle—'How, in St. Petersburg, can one dispose of one's property, when it lies in the hands of the police?' The solution of the riddle—that one must make a present of the pro-

perty—will, *perhaps*, astonish him. What is pretty certain, however, is, that if you will breakfast with me to-morrow, you shall eat your soup with the spoon in question. Whether you breakfast with me *in* uniform or *out* of uniform, depends upon the impression which the solution of my riddle may make upon Perowsky."

Again the man in office laughed; but this time the laughter was somewhat forced; and his arms, which he had akimbo, fell by his sides.

"Well, well!" he said, with constrained joviality, "the joke has lasted long enough. Here is your spoon. When shall I breakfast with you?"

"When you bring me back my silver spoon. Until then, your most obedient servant." And I left him.

I did not dine with Perowsky. I never saw that minister in my life; but his name is a talisman of might against faithless officials, as it also is the terror of thieves and sharpers. By adapting it to a harmless stratagem, I recovered my property.

Such is the Russian police.

The boldness of the St. Petersburg thieves is on at least as magnificent a scale as the rascality of those employed to detect them. Even in London and Paris, I doubt whether any idea can be formed of it. Kakuschkin, the chief of police, was not very popular in the Russian capital; but by the thieves he was especially detested, for his severity almost equalled their audacity. So there was a double temptation to despoil him—the gain to the spoilers, and the vexation of the spoiled. He possessed, amongst other things, a magnificent porphyry vase, which stood upon a no less costly pedestal. How the thieves managed to steal the vase is still a riddle; but stolen it was. For six months the police hunted after it; not a trace but was followed up and explored; not a thieves' hiding-place but was examined; but all was in vain. At last hope was abandoned, and the authorities relaxed their vigilance. One day, however, a policeman went to Kakuschkin's wife, and took her the joyful intelligence that the thief was discovered, the vase already at the police office, and that her husband had sent him for the pedestal, in order to identify the stolen object. Madame Kakuschkin was overjoyed: and when her husband came home to dinner she ran to meet him, in high glee.

"Well," she cried, "and the vase?"

"What vase?"

"The stolen vase, which has been found: the vase whose pedestal you sent for?"

"Whose pedestal I sent for! Whom did I send?"

"A policeman."

"Say, rather, a *policeman's uniform.* I sent no policeman, nor have I heard aught of the vase, or of its pedestal."

When the chief of the police is thus made game of, what must be the lot of the poor citizens, to whom thieves and police are alike dangerous?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ROD AND KNOUT.

HAPPY days of childhood!—what reader will not be reminded of them by the first word of this Chapter's title? Who has not moments when he dreams himself back to that light-hearted period, when the father's threatening forefinger at times pointed warningly to the instrument of childish torture. And if the reminiscence calls up a slight shudder, it still is coupled with pleasant memories of joyous boyhood, of the paternal love that carefully guarded our youth, and of the kind parent whose very severity sprang from anxiety for our future welfare. The rod was certainly not the pleasantest feature of that time; but that was the pleasantest time when we were still subject to the rod.

Such recollections, however, will hardly make us envy a nation which, from the cradle to the grave, is subject to a like chastisement. The people's rod and the boy's rod are very different things. The loving hand which wields the former is a somewhat rude one.

Men are beaten in Russia, and very much beaten! 'Tis a sad state of things; but the saddest part of it is not the beating itself, but its necessity. The practice has two other disadvantages—one physical, and one moral.

It were superfluous to go into an exposition of the physical

detriment to the person who receives the blows. That is pretty evident. But the moral detriment attains the whole nation; for the practice stamps it as a barbarous one, and makes it pass in the eyes of foreigners for a horde of savages, ruled only by the stick. The idea of Russia has become so identified with the knout, that not a bagman who is bound thither receives his passport with the Russian *visa* without a slight tingling of the epidermis. This bugbear of the knout has done an immensity of harm to the country's reputation, and has caused a vast number of one-sided judgments to be passed upon it. Hence the contradictory reports of a land which lies so near to us, but concerning which we know so little. He who does not take the trouble duly to weigh causes and effects, and who judges things Russian according to their mere external aspect, will set down Russia as a paradise or a hell, according as his social position elevates him above the people—depriving him of opportunities to observe their condition and mode of life, or confines him exclusively to their society. And yet Russia is neither of those two things; but there is no denying that it unites within itself, far more than any other country, the most contradictory elements. The splendour, the regal magnificence and elegance of a Russian drawing-room blind you; but the next moment you are filled with disgust by the dirt of the anteroom. There you have all Russia in one single picture: laws, institutions, manners, customs, mode of life—everywhere you find the same character,—this moral and physical combination of splendour and dirt.

German philanthropy considers corporal punishments to be dishonourable, degrading, inhuman, barbarous. All this I admit; and, according to *our ideas*, I share this opinion, but only in so far as it springs from the ideas that prevail amongst us. If you base these assertions on the nature of man, I at once deny their truth, and say that it is no such thing; that corporal punishment is simply painful, and that all the rest is merely *idea*.

I cannot attain to that excess of philanthropy, fired by which old Itzstein demanded, in the Baden chamber, in the year 1837, that robbers and murderers, when in prison, should have meat to eat at least four times a week, whilst honest and industrious labourers often pass four weeks without eating meat once. The same old

Itzstein wept, in the tribune of the same chamber, during the debate whether certain offences of convicts should subject them to corporal punishment; and pleaded, in excuse for his weakness, that he could not restrain his tears for grief at hearing the word "blows" named, at our time of day, and in that place. At the same time an old peasant, who sat near me, was also moved to tears. I asked him the reason of his emotion.

"Ah!" he sobbed out, "how well Herr von Itzstein now speaks; I cannot help crying for grief that the worthy gentleman was not of the same opinion twenty years ago. He was then bailiff at Schwetzingen, and had me flogged, for a mere trifle, till you might have heard me roar at Heidelberg!"

There you have the riddle solved! He who is no longer bailiff over Schwetzingen peasants can afford to play the philanthropist; be for a while bailiff over Russian peasants, and philanthropy will assuredly lose ground.

The first place where Russians are beaten is at their schools That is barbarous, is it not? but does not the same thing occur at German schools? In the latter case no mention of the practice is to be found in the regulations, but it is to be traced on the knuckles of the boys, and often in bloody characters. In Russian schools, and particularly in the *corps*, the rod is formally recognised as a disciplinary punishment. I will not applaud the practice, although it certainly is attended with less danger to the health of the children than that sort of *ad libitum* random beating which—although not strictly legal—does not the less surely occur, and which may just as well knock out an eye as fall upon some part of the body better adapted for the reception of blows.

The moral influence may be more injurious; but I do not believe that it deadens the feeling of honour, for the chastisement is inflicted as a punishment, not as a disgrace. In short, the honour or dishonour of the thing depends upon the idea attached to it, and, according to Russian ideas, corporal punishments at school are not dishonouring.

Apprentices are beaten in Russia. *There* nobody takes any heed of the practice. Here an immense deal is said about it, but the strap is not on that account a bit the less active.

We now come to the army.

Is the Russian army the only one in Europe subjected to corporal punishment? How long is it since Prussia abolished it? and previously to its abolishment was Prussia a barbarous country? Or does Austria now pass for one, although hazel stick and stirrup leather still play their part in her military *régime?* Does not the fleet of the freest country in Europe still boast of its "cat," and did not the victor of Waterloo speak in the Upper House against its abolition? The mere fact of corporal punishment being permitted is, however, subordinate in importance to the mode of its infliction. In the Russian army officers are allowed to inflict only a strictly limited number of blows, for offences against discipline. The greater punishments—which are really severe and even dangerous to life, and which are similar to that of running the gauntlet, formerly used in Prussia (but in Russia the number of blows is often greater)—can be inflicted only by sentence of court-martial. That they are cruel, often horrible to behold, belongs to the chapter of Russian contradictions.

I am an enthusiastic panegyrist of all that I found *good* in Russia, and am so much the more disposed to praise whatever things there are really praiseworthy, because *out* of Russia I have universally found those things misrepresented. But I do my best in these, my Pictures from St. Petersburg, to paint, with equally vivid colours, whatever I saw that was blamable and bad. Unadorned truth is my guide and motto. And I hope to be believed when I exhibit the *good*, because it will be seen that I do not suppress the *bad*.

The humanity of the Russian laws, which in many respects cannot be too highly praised (how they are often mal-administered has been already shown in this volume), has long abolished capital punishment, except in case of high treason. In its place are the Rod and the Knout. Sentences to punishment by the former often condemn to such a vast number of blows that the hide of an elephant could not withstand them. Human nature must sink and expire under them. In this dilemma, Russian humanity has had recourse to the plan of the tender-hearted boy, who, in order not to hurt his dog too much at one time, cut off a little bit of his ears every day until he was sufficiently cropped. What man can endure

4000 blows of a stick? They would inevitably kill him, which is no part of the condemnation; and, as a proof that this is not desired, the sentence concludes by ordaining that, after he has received his punishment, he shall be sent for life to Siberia.

The officer in command of the troops ordered for the execution of the sentence is responsible for its being literally and completely carried out. This responsibility he lays, in his turn, upon the shoulders of the regimental surgeon. The delinquent—civilian or soldier, it matters not which—marches down the fatal street of men, with a soldier in front and in rear, whose levelled bayonets prevent his hanging back or unduly hurrying on. Upon his left walks the surgeon, holding the unhappy wretch's hand in his, and anxiously watching the state of the pulse. When its diminished beat gives token of danger, the punishment, on a signal from the medical man, is immediately suspended, the exhausted sufferer is placed in a cart and taken to the hospital. The horrible, but yet humaner, practice of the Austrians, to inflict the entire number of blows prescribed by the sentence, even though the latter portion of them fall upon a corpse, is here strictly prohibited. The patient is taken care of in the hospital until recovery, and then—another bit of the ear is cut off. If this process be often repeated, he usually dies in consequence of his wounds; but in that case justice has not actually *killed* him! Should he ultimately recover, he is sent to Siberia. It seems incredible, but is nevertheless true, that many criminals have thus taken, by instalments, 4000 or 5000 blows, and lived to drag out many years of melancholy existence in Siberian deserts.

The second and still severer punishment is that of the knout, with respect to which the most fantastical notions prevail in Germany. According to these, a man gets the knout in Russia as he may get a ribbon or an order, without rhyme or reason. That is not exactly the case. Before the punishment of the knout can be inflicted, it must be proved that such a crime has been committed as would entail, in every civilized country the punishment of death. For the knout is the substitute for capital punishment. It cannot be inflicted without the Emperor's own signature. For the rest, though the sentence proceeds from the judge, its effect depends entirely upon the executioner who wields the knout. Does he mean

to be humane to his victim?—he kills him with the first lash; for so great is the instrument's weight that it enables him to break the spine at a single blow. This is not, however, usually done, and the unfortunate culprit receives the whole number prescribed, which rarely exceeds half-a-dozen. Here no surgeon attends, as on occasions of running the gauntlet, to regulate the punishment. If the criminal dies under the knout, no one is answerable—the motive for such exemption from responsibility doubtless being that the very *first* blow may be fatal. If he survives, he is sent, when cured, to Siberia. And instances of persons surviving this frightful punishment have frequently been known to occur.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT.

THE relation of the Russian peasant to his master is that of the slave to his owner—the sulky obedience of impotence to power and force. Instinct bids the serf extract as much advantage as he can from the connection with his lord, and to do as little as he can in return. By *advantage* he understands brandy, for which he will do anything, even work. Upon the other hand, if he can shirk labour, he deems it a sacred duty to himself to do so. The Russian always seems extremely busy, but it is only *seeming;* upon the whole he gets through about half as much work as a free German day labourer.

The dress of the Russian peasant is well suited to the climate, convenient and not ugly. He wears a shirt, and trousers of blue or red-striped linen, and over them a caftan of blue, grey, or brown cloth, which reaches below the knee, is cut obliquely from the throat to the breast, and studded with cylindrical buttons of brass or white metal. Throat, head, and feet, are bare. His throat is protected by the very strong but not proportionally long beard; his hair is usually cropped round the head, but sometimes is allowed to flow down upon the shoulders. His girdle is a broad linen band, in

which he sticks his usual tool, the axe, and in winter time his gloves. In the winter he exchanges his caftan for a sheepskin, covers his head with a round or four-cornered cap, envelopes his feet with folds of linen, and draws on strong boots or a sort of shoes which he calls *labkar*, and which are very skilfully made out of the bark of birch or lime-trees. Of these shoes he will wear out twenty or thirty pair in the course of a year; they cost only about fifteen kopecks, and most of them are made at Sepuchof, a town to the south of Moscow. Of late years this kind of shoes is not so universally worn as formerly, for such a great quantity of them were made, that the forests near the place of manufacture were seriously injured by the stripping of the bark from the trees. Those peasants, therefore, who are too poor to buy boots, wrap up their feet in cloth and sacking, which gives them the appearance of elephant's feet. Except in this last respect, the whole costume has a great resemblance with that of the lower classes of English in the time of Richard the Second (fourteenth century).

The Russian peasant women are by no means beautiful. They are short-bodied squat figures, with round faces, high cheek-bones, coarse features, and pallid complexions. Those amongst them who pretend to good looks and wish to improve their appearance, use paint; but they lay it on so unskilfully that they cannot be said to mend matters. Their beauty, however, bears due proportion to the idea of beauty entertained by that class of Russians who estimate personal comeliness by bodily circumference. The more corpulent a woman, the more admirers will she have. Such being the beau ideal of the Russian of the lower orders, he finds abundant objects of admiration. When the first bloom of youth has passed away (this occurs at a very early age) all the women get fat, which may arise, partly from their lazy habits, partly from their too frequent employment of vapour baths. They are puffed out rather than plump, and are deficient in that firmness and elasticity of form which impart such attraction to the appearance of other European women, even of an equally low degree. The climate may also have something to do with this; at least, I infer that it may, from the quality of the flesh of domestic animals, which in Russia is much more spongy than in Germany. And this is a theme of eternal

complaint with German housewives in Russia, who declare that beef shrinks so much in the cooking that it comes out of the pot hardly half the size it went in. Be this as it may, corpulence is an important item in a Russian's estimate of beauty; and that is the case not only in the country, but in the higher circles of the capital, where such stateliness of exterior is much prized, at least in servants. Certain it is that a bulky full-bodied coachman may reckon upon a few hundred rubles extra annual wages; and if, to bodily weight, the colossus adds the advantage of a correspondingly bushy and redundant beard, he may consider his fortune made.

The dress of the peasant women, even of the poorest, is not altogether ungraceful. They wear short gowns of blue cloth braided with all the colours of the rainbow, and having the stomacher fastened by a row of cylindrical buttons. The young girls part their hair smoothly in the Chinese style, and tie it at the extremity with a knot of ribbons; but as soon as they are married they carefully conceal it under a headdress. This consists of a bright-coloured cloth of gay pattern, fastened tightly under the chin, and which on festival days is further embellished with ornaments of gold or coloured stones. On such occasions also, the throat and head are adorned with strings of beads and with gold and silver coins, to the utmost of the wearer's means.

In the severest winter the Russian peasant women give no further protection to their heads. Their bodies, on the other hand, are enveloped in thick sheepskins, and their feet carefully protected by very warm stockings and boots. In summer they go always barefoot. When they would make themselves particularly fine, they put on a red *Sarafan*, or long gown, and load their head, neck and breast with everything they can scrape together in the way of beads, gold, and silver. Even to these poor lingerers upon the lowest step of civilisation's ladder, vanity is by no means unknown.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A DAY AT SARSKOJÈ-SÉLO.

IT was a Sunday, and the weather was delightful. A convoy of Mecklenberg saddle-horses had been brought to St. Petersburg for the Emperor. They had been put up at Sarskojè-Sélo, and as I am a passionate lover of horses, the Emperor's chief of the stables, Herr Böttger, son of the former riding-master to the royal family at Berlin, invited me to visit him and to inspect my four-footed countrymen. I set off by the first train. The carriages were crammed, for there was a festival to be held that day at Pawlowsk, two versts from Sarskojè-Sélo. As we got over the two and forty versts in an hour and a quarter, we arrived quite early, and had plenty of time, before the crowd came, to see all that was best worth seeing in that imperial summer residence.

First and foremost that which most struck me was the extraordinary cleanliness of the little town. Versailles is a pig-stye compared with it. So far is the zeal for cleanliness carried, that people are constantly employed patrolling the grounds with shovels and brooms in order to remove any impurity left by the passing vehicles upon the carriage roads. A pensioned officer has the superintendence of the grounds, hobbles about from morning to night by the help of a wooden leg, and prides himself not a little on the strict performance of his duty. When he once accompanied the Archduke Michael over the place on his return from a journey, and pointed out to him all the contrivances he had introduced for the preservation of perfect cleanliness, the Archduke exclaimed, "Pasluschi! one thing I miss! I do not see any spitting-boxes!"

The palace has some resemblance with that of Versailles, but in colour it is extraordinarily variegated, and the masses of green which glitter between the windows are particularly startling to the eye. The length of the building is 800 feet, and amongst the apartments are especially to be noticed the two beautiful Glass Saloons, and the Amber Saloon. The costly pine wood of the latter was a present from King Frederick William I. to Peter the Great.

I could not learn where this wainscoting had been kept until the building of the palace by the Empress Elizabeth.

The garden is charming, laid out in the old French style. The newer portions of the grounds are modern in their arrangement, with many little hillocks and fishponds: the latter are of tolerable extent, and on one of them is a miniature representation of an arsenal, which affords much amusement. You may go out for a cruise in the miniature frigates, fire off the pocket cannons, &c., &c. Beautiful statues adorn isolated spots in the gardens, and amongst them is remarkable, erected hard by a fountain, an embodiment of Gellert's fable of "Castles in the Air," in a statue of the purest white marble, representing the country girl with the eggs. A building is set apart expressly for an armoury. Its roomy apartments are filled from top to bottom with antique weapons, trophies, &c., in view of which one doubts whether most to admire and wonder at the costliness of the objects, or the exquisite taste of their arrangement, which is entirely the work of the present Emperor's own hands. Amongst the most striking objects is a crimson and pale blue velvet saddle with bridle, &c., all studded with precious stones of great value; presents from the late sultan, after the last treaty of peace. At one extremity of the garden are monuments of imperial gratitude to faithful—*animals!* Here is the stable of the equine pensioners, the worn-out favourites of the Emperor and Empress, who in their old age are better provided for than many a meritorious state-servant. These invalid horses are conscientiously tended and taken care of by guardians appointed for that purpose. Russian gratitude does not stop here, but extends even beyond the grave. In this there is little to humiliate us Germans; for we, too, are usually just to the dead. Here we come to the graves of the dogs of the Empress Catherine II. Gladly would I have carried away one of the handsome slabs—that one, for instance, which bears the inscription: "Here lies *Duchesse*, the faithful travelling companion of Sir Thomas Anderson. She followed him to Russia in 1776, and died in 1782, beloved by her numerous descendants, amounting to 115 greyhounds of both sexes." I would gladly, I say, have conveyed this handsome piece of granite to my civilised native land, so ardent in its cultivation of art and science; have had

engraved on the other side, "Here lies Germany's greatest poet," and with it have marked the grave of Bürger, should the exertions of the youths now studying at Göttingen ever succeed in discovering—*where that grave is!* It is hard that the sight of a dog's tomb in barbarous Russia should make our cheeks tingle to remember how Germany honours her great men. Well, some day or other amends will doubtless be made by decreeing a column to a ballet-dancer or horse-rider.

I rambled all over Sarskojè-Sélo, and visited the Empress's Swiss farmhouse. I will say nothing of the elegance of the building, or of the perfection of its internal fittings up: all that is found a hundred times repeated in the various imperial habitations. But I must speak of the cowhouse belonging to it, which is assuredly unique in its style. Roomy, neat, and elegant, its like will hardly be found. The racks, troughs, mangers, and other receptacles for the food—I can hardly make up my mind to say fodder—are of the finest wood, I believe even of mahogany: the floors are waxed and polished: nothing is wanting save and except dresses for each individual cow.

The sole merit I attribute to these sketches being that of conscientious truth, I will not affirm to have seen mirrors in these cowhouses, although I almost believe such things were there, and certainly they are included in the general impression which the sight of the place has left upon my mind. I was informed that the late Grandduchess Alexandra passed, by advice of the physicians, and shortly before her lamented decease, several nights in this stable. It is quite conceivable that she derived little benefit from the exhalations of the cattle, for the cowhouse smells of mille-fleurs rather than of cows. The beauty of the inmates fully corresponds with that of their habitation: they come from various European countries; from Switzerland, France, Scotland, &c. By the Empress's wish the beasts were hung with modulated bells, which must have imparted a peculiar charm to their roamings in the pastures. But the barbarous ear of the superintendent could not reconcile itself to the tinkling, and the Empress did not insist on her will being carried out. An Empress of Russia has much power; but sometimes her *Tschinovniks* (officers) have still more.

From the Swiss farm I strolled through luxuriant meadows to a

village, where an acquaintance of mine had his country-house. Mirth and joy received me there. It was a Sunday, and a festival day to boot. The country people, in holiday attire, came streaming in from all sides. The opulent inhabitants of the village mingled with the peasantry, spent their money freely, and so increased and extended the festivity of the day. Amongst the throng, the *nurses* were particularly remarkable. A special interest attaches to this class of persons. At first sight one is not impressed by their beauty; but on nearer inspection one is compelled to admit that they are perfectly hideous. This is at least the rule; there are, however, exceptions. Finland and Ingria are the districts most fertile in these productions; from those provinces they come in troops to St. Petersburg. It is a regular colonization, a profession, a business. Now certainly, in a "barbarous" country, where oppression, whilst keeping down freedom, prevents the blossom of good morals from unfolding itself, one cannot wonder at such a state of things; but in free Baden I confess myself to have been truly surprised at its existence; astonished at the discovery that, in enlightened Germany, in the free and moral Grand Duchy, there is speculation in the same article. Yonder poor girls from Finland and Ingria make use of their "misfortune" as a means of existence; in the pious Black Forest such a "misfortune" is ardently desired, for it is a source of prosperity and of "domestic happiness." Here a young couple, loving, but poor, can aspire to the benediction of the Church only when nature has already conferred upon them hers; the fruit of their love is then left in its native hamlet; whilst the young nurse, who has obtained a situation through some register office at Mannheim, Carlsruhe, Darmstadt, Heidelberg, &c., betakes herself to the town, usually with the clothes she stands in for sole baggage, and returns, in a year's time, with a good outfit and a few hundred florins, to the rural home of innocence. After their long and painful separation, she again reposes on her lover's bosom, until a second parting summons her to fresh gains. For the second time she returns home richly laden, a cottage is taken, with its paddock and nook of garden, and the priest tardily consecrates the connection to which the pair are indebted for their prosperity.

Notwithstanding the immense affluence of nurses to St. Peters-

burg, there once occurred, in consequence of the number of foundlings, so great a dearth of them, that in the foundling hospital it was found necessary to substitute milch-goats. Whether, however, the milk was too heating in its quality, or that the change in the animals' food had a bad effect upon them, most of the children to whom these four-legged nurses were given fell sick, and the auxiliary flock were dismissed.

Amongst the numerous nurses circulating through the crowd, I was particularly struck by one, who carried in her arms a lovely child, and was attended by a great Newfoundland dog, which, like her shadow, followed every step she took. I knew the dog, for I had often seen him at Tscherneretzkow when driving to my country-house at Kalomeja. Thence I concluded that nurse and child belonged to the dog's master, a Russian count, who resided at the former place. This nurse, a girl about eighteen years of age, of tall, slender figure, with a profusion of chestnut hair, black eyes, and teeth like alabaster, was evidently from the interior of Russia. She wore the national dress; her brown shoulders were partially covered with a fine chemise of brilliant whiteness, embroidered in various colours; the sleeves, which reached to the elbows, were very large; the stomacher was studded with cylindrical buttons, and adorned with gold cords and laces. Below the short frock, garnished with many colours, appeared parti-coloured stockings, over which were shapeless shoes. On her head she wore a rich gold coif, in the form of a frontlet, from which depended beads, corals, and a quantity of gold trinkets; ears and throat were overloaded with valuable baubles. All these costly ornaments and finery are heaped upon the nurse when she arrives—often half-naked—in her employer's house, and they remain her property. When she quits service she easily finds a husband, thanks to the valuables she possesses, but she does not retain her trinkets very long. The husband usually makes away with them within a very short time after the wedding, and beats his young wife into the bargain, which, however, does not make a very serious hole in their love, for a year later she has another strapping child at that breast—now covered with rags—which, a few months previously, had glittered with gold and beads. Cases have even been known when a young wife has gone weeping to her

neighbour, and complained that her husband did not love her any more, for it was a month since he had beaten her. To this one can say nothing, except,—so many countries, so many customs!

The joy and merriment of the throng assembled by the festival were extremely great. Processions of young girls made the circuit of the houses of the gentry, singing as they went. They then repaired to a meadow in front of the village, and danced to the music of violins, upon which several young men scraped away with all their might. Other lads were wrestling on the grass; the children amused themselves with swings, and the old people sat over their *quass* or *schei* (tea). It is worthy of remark that in the very largest assemblages of Russians, composed of the most various classes, I never heard that tumultuous noise which characterises even the smallest meetings of our country people.

We left the good folks to their enjoyments, and drove to Pawlowsk.

As I have spoken above of the beautiful Newfoundland dog, I will not conclude this chapter without recording his heroic and tragical end. A few days after this meeting I was driving out to my country residence at Kalomeja. As I passed along the road through Tscherneretzkow, which runs between the river whose name the village takes, and the mansion of the count, I saw a great crowd collected round a one-horse vehicle; to the horse's rein clung the Newfoundland dog, and it was impossible to detach him from it. His master, it appeared, had driven home in the droschki, when, just as he turned into the gateway, the horse shied, and backed so rapidly towards the river that the hind wheels were in the water in an instant. The vehicle and its owner were to all appearance lost, when the noble dog sprang at the horse's head and held the animal so firmly by the bridle, that it was compelled to stand its ground and cease its retrograde movement. On the count's shout for aid, people came up and got the horse and vehicle upon the road. The count was saved, but his faithful dog had bitten so violently into the bridle that his jaw had become in some way locked, and all attempts to part his teeth were in vain. For a whole hour these painful endeavours were repeated; the blood ran in streams from the poor brute's mouth, but to get it open was im-

possible. The count was in despair; but the case was one for which there was no remedy. At last he sent his gamekeeper for fire-arms. The man levelled his gun at the noble dog, but the count could not bear to behold his favourite fall by a stranger's hand. He tremblingly grasped the weapon, and took aim; but, although close to his mark, he could not see for the tears that filled his eyes, and he missed. A shot from the gamekeeper took sure effect. The dog had no sooner fallen than the count pressed his body to his breast as passionately as though it had been that of some dear and much-lamented friend. I could not longer bear to contemplate this painful scene, and drove on. Before I had turned a corner near at hand, a third shot was fired; turning quickly round I saw the valuable horse rear high in the air, and then fall lifeless to the earth. The count threw his rifle on the beast's carcase and rushed into the house.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A WINTER MORNING IN THE COUNTRY.

IT was a splendid winter's morning. Even before rising from his bed, the Russian is at once informed of such a day by a glance at the thermometer, which hangs between his double windows, and stands at sixteen or eighteen degrees below zero. With this dry cold the wind is always very light, and it falls in proportion as the quicksilver sinks; until, at twenty degrees below zero, there is usually a dead calm. If, in addition to this, there be a gleam of sunshine, the fine winter day is complete, and leaves nothing to be desired. On such a day was it that we started on an expedition "to the Colony."

Nine o'clock struck as the sledges drove up to the door. I was informed of their arrival, or should otherwise not have been aware of it, for I could not see them from my apartment on the second floor, whose double windows, as well as the thickness of the walls, allowed a view only of the opposite side of the street. And sledges in Russia do not announce their coming, as in Germany, by the

jingle of bells studding the harness of the horses. On the country roads one sometimes meets with these bells; but their use is strictly forbidden in the city, on account of the intolerable noise they would occasion.

I was already dressed, and went down stairs. I must not withhold from the reader a description of my dress, for I can imagine his curiosity to know in what sort of accoutrement people start for a country excursion on the banks of the Neva, with sixteen degrees of frost. Let him not be uneasy. I was well equipped,—that is to say, I wore exactly the same dress in which I daily drove to the theatre—a ten minutes' drive from my dwelling—where on entering the hall I at once found myself in a temperature of fourteen degrees above zero. I wore a light frock coat, over which I put on a fur pelisse. On my head I had a beaver cap. The covering of my feet consisted, besides ordinary leather boots—which are made very neatly and elegantly at St. Petersburg—of nothing but a pair of India rubber over-shoes. By way of precaution I took a shawl with me, but made no use of it. These are the terrors of a Russian winter.

Before the door, I found two tolerably long sledges, each adapted to hold four persons comfortably, and each having three horses harnessed to it, of which the centre one, a trotter, went in the shafts, whilst his two companions galloped on either side. One of the sledges had a linen roof or hood, in the style of our demi-chaises.

Before directing our course to our ultimate object, we were compelled to accept the invitation of a countryman of ours, who had arranged the party, and to accompany him to his country-house. Of these country-houses there are three kinds. First, those inhabited by their owners; secondly, farm-houses belonging to the country people, which are to be divided into two classes,—namely, houses whose owners let them for a term of years—usually for ten years—and which the tenants are then at liberty to improve and fit up as best pleases them—of course at their own expense—and houses which the farmer inhabits himself during the winter, cleans up and papers, and puts in decent order for the summer, for which season he lets them, stowing himself and his family away in

any little narrow nook. Our friend's country-house belonged to the first division of this second class, and was situated at a distance of nine versts from St. Petersburg, in a village on the road to Pergola.

After many compliments, German fashion, the ladies got into the half-covered sledge, and we men into the open one; we lit our Russian cigars, which, as our host expressed it, are bad to burn and strong to smell, and drove merrily off. In less than three-quarters of an hour we got over the distance: we had driven across a level moor, and various branches of the Neva: nothing impeded us: holes and ditches were all filled with snow, and across the boundless plain we rattled at full gallop, over the hard frozen crust, which sparkled like diamonds in the sunshine. A wreath of smoke, rising in the clear atmosphere, first announced to us the vicinity of the little village, which lay at the other side of a slight elevation. On reaching the summit of this, we perceived, at some distance, a lively movement upon the ground, proceeding apparently from living creatures, but what these creatures were we could not immediately discern, owing to an avenue which impeded our view. On emerging from this, we turned to the left, and suddenly found ourselves at the distance of a stone's throw from the objects that had excited our curiosity. These were neither more nor less than a bevy of young girls, in that antique costume—which, nevertheless, is always *a la mode*—in which Dame Nature had sent them into the world. Without the least fear of tumbling their dress, they were rolling in the snow, laughing and romping. Our sudden arrival put them to flight, and sent them screaming behind a hedge, whence, to punish us for our immoderate laughter, they pelted us with snow-balls and lumps of ice till we could hardly see out of our eyes, and their bashfulness would consequently have been spared our gaze, had not the horses—which, although perfectly innocent, came in for a share of the punishment—refused to advance. Fortunately the second sledge, with the ladies,—who had been afraid to drive so fast as we did—was still tolerably far behind; so we made a show of dismounting, to drive the enemy from their entrenchments. No sooner, however, had they discovered our object than, after delivering one last volley, they took to precipitate flight, and

crept into an adjacent oven with the agility of marmots: only the youngest, a little thing about fifteen years of age, remained behind, hastily gathering up the clothes, and, as it seemed, quite upon the alert, so as, in case of further pursuit, to throw them to her companions. The approach of the second sledge put an end to the adventure; we jumped into ours, made as though we had seen nothing, and soon pulled up in front of our friend's country-house.

A servant received us, and ushered us into a room, heated to an agreeable temperature, where a dining-table seemed on the point of breaking down under the load of eatables, amongst which were a rich supply of fish pies and meat pies, whilst a bright brass *samovar* smoked cheerfully on the board. Neither the ladies nor ourselves had felt the cold in the least; but the drive had nevertheless given us famous appetites. German formality was soon laid aside, and all helped themselves, in true Russian style, without constraint, and without waiting to be pressed, to the brandy, beer, *quass*, *kislitschi*, wine, tea, pies, white and black bread, ham, cheese roast meat, sausages, and all the other things which the really exaggerated hospitality of Russia had there collected together; and thus did a short hour pass away, during which the mouth's activity was devoted to other purposes than to a regular conversation. When the urgent cravings of the stomach were satisfied, the company went to walk in an adjacent wood; I remained behind, to indulge my passion for observation, and to look about me a little in the village, and in the houses of its inhabitants.

First of all I examined the exterior of the cottage occupied by the farmer from whom my friend rented his country-house. It stood close to the latter, and, like it, was composed entirely of massive beams. The small panes of glass in the windows did not permit a view of the interior of the habitation, so covered were they with dirt. To reach the stables I had to cross a tolerably spacious court, strewed with all sorts of broken and disjointed fragments of carts and farming implements. A handsome roomy three stall stable and a coach-house were empty. They belonged to my friend's house. On the other hand, in a sort of closet, large and lofty enough at most for half-a-dozen sheep, I found a little horse, scarcely bigger than a one-year-old calf, whose condition was strictly

in proportion to his growth, and who seemed striving to prolong his wretched existence by chewing the scanty blades of straw which he was able to pick out of the bed of dung on which he stood. I then visited the barn, and found it full of straw. Although it still wanted several weeks to Christmas, there was no corn left in the ear. On examining the straw I observed that it was extremely well threshed out—better than I ever saw it on a German farm: it was more bruised and broken up than our straw usually is; but not a grain remained in the ears. The farmer showed me the reason of this, by taking me to the threshing floor. This was an open space, composed, as I discovered—after we had with considerable labour shovelled away the snow which lay some feet deep over it—of clay beaten and stamped to a hard surface. Close by was a sort of stove, and over this a flat place, covered by a roof, where the wheat is dried immediately after the harvest, and then at once threshed out. My guide explained to me the twofold advantage of this arrangement, which enables a needy man at once to realise the value of his crop, and so to meet the debts contracted during the summer, and to lay in some sort of stores against winter: moreover, the grain comes more easily and thoroughly out of the dried straw, and the mice's portion is economised by threshing it as soon as got in. These advantages were evident enough; but whether the straw thus dried does not lose some of its value as fodder, I was inclined to doubt, and I was no longer at a loss to comprehend the meagre condition of the calf-like horse. I was now shown the stove, which was constructed in the same way as ours in Germany; and when I spoke of the other stove or oven in which our snow-balling friends had taken refuge, I was informed that it was a bath-room! This discovery greatly excited my curiosity. I found nothing, however, but a great empty place, similar to our baking ovens, with a hearth, upon whose flags, when glowing with heat, cold water is poured, whereby such a steam is generated as certainly fully justifies the name of "vapour bath." I determined to investigate this curious arrangement more closely on my return to St. Petersburg, and now went to visit the interior of the farm-house.

On opening the door, we were met by such a steam and smoke, that I thought I was entering a vapour-bath in my turn. I could

distinguish nothing. At the very first step, I put my foot upon a living creature, and the squealing that ensued warned me that I had discourteously interfered with the comfort of a pig. Anxious to repair my blunder, I threw myself hastily on my other leg, and stamped upon a child, whose violent screams so far lessened my alarm that they convinced me I had not trodden it to death. I staggered back in consternation, stumbled over a cat and two dogs, who were chasing each other in my immediate vicinity, and flew backwards through the door. The farmer broke my fall, or I should have come down upon the snow with greater violence than I did, and perhaps have crushed some chickens and rabbits, or a few more children. Whilst I picked myself up, and, with the farmer's help, brushed the snow from my clothes, the open door had in some degree cleared the room of smoke; so that, on again entering, I could distinguish objects tolerably well. Pig and child had recovered from their terror, and were peaceably playing together upon the floor. The combatants had abandoned the field of battle, and gone forth into the open air. Opposite the door was a small square window, sparingly admitting the daylight. In front of this stood a three-legged stool, with a table, on which lay the unmistakable implements of a shoemaker. Shoes, too, were there, which I can safely swear belonged neither to Elsler nor to Palmyra Anato. In a corner stood a bed, with curtains, whose colour it was impossible to decide; a crucifix was stuck up against the wall, with a picture of a saint on either side of it. Beside the bed was suspended, from four strings, a basket-like frame, which did duty as a cradle, whose delicate proprietor was still gambolling with the swine. On the walls hung pictures of saints; in a sort of niche, a lamp burned in front of one of these. There was also a bit of looking-glass, about as big as a moderate-sized snuff-box, stuck against the wall, and beside it was a portrait of the Emperor. Besides a table to eat upon, a chair, the stove-bench, and a considerable heap of dirt, I saw no other furniture in the room. Behind the bench was a great stone stove, which rose to two-thirds of the height of the chimney. Upon this stove, which was tolerably hot, lay the mistress of the house, and beside her a young girl, who was not much more dressed than those we had surprised on our road. When her eye met mine, she bowed

the upper part of her body, and drew a sheepskin to her, which she threw over her shoulders, and soon afterwards got off and behind the stove. From the smiling manner in which she greeted me, I saw that she was one of the damsels whose acquaintance we had so oddly made during our drive from St. Petersburg. The indescribable filth of the sheepskin contrasted strangely with the cleanliness of her skin. Her hair hung dripping over her shoulders; which, like her cheeks, glowed with the results of the bath. I would willingly have extended my observations a little further; but the oppressive heat and tremendous smoke went near to stifle me. I hurried out of the place, and, when I turned round at the door, to close it after me, I saw that the young girl had already discarded her sheepskin, and was getting upon the stove again, to lie down beside her mother, who, being, perhaps, under the influence of drink, had been a motionless and silent spectatress of the whole scene.

Such is the interior of the dwelling of a Russian peasant. When I reached the door of the villa, my companions were already in the sledges, and waited only for me. I jumped in. Soon, villa, farmhouse, and stove were out of sight, and at a rapid gallop we were on our way to the German colony.

CHAPTER XL.

AN EVENING IN THE GERMAN COLONY.

ALONG the Moscow Sastava, several versts upon the road to Moscow, one reaches the first "German Colony." The cold had diminished considerably; towards noon, a gentle wind arose, and a light shower of snow came driving after us from the north-east. In Russia, snow does not fall in flakes as with us; or at least, when it does so fall, it is an exception to the rule, and a bad sign; for that sort of snow does not form itself into compact masses, but usually melts at once, and is the forerunner of thaw. On the other hand, people like this kind of snow to fall, and a general thaw to set in immediately after the first heavy fall of snow; but upon one

condition, which is usually fulfilled, that it shall again freeze and snow hard. Then the thaw has sunk the snow, which forms a strong foundation of ice; and the fresh snow, falling upon this, makes an excellent surface for sledging. Such weather as we now encountered is of the kind considered disagreeable in Russia. On starting in the morning, we had sixteen degrees of frost; but, as there was scarcely a breath of wind, we did not suffer in the least from the severity of the cold. In the course of the first five or six hours of the day, the thermometer rose, perhaps, ten degrees; but then the wind rose also; and although not violent, it was very disagreeable, and chilled us through. Fortunately, we had it on our backs; and, as the ladies were partially sheltered by the cover of their sledge, the amount of discomfort endured was not so great as to spoil the pleasure of the excursion. Nevertheless, all our countenances brightened up, when the sight of the distant church tower proclaimed our approach to the end of our journey. The *istworstschick* gathered up his reins, bent forward over his horses, and cracked his whip. The vigorous animals increased their speed, and soon our sledge glided through the snug village, and stopped at the door of the house we had come to visit.

Before the other sledge came up, I had abundance of time to take a view of the building. What an immense difference between this and all the other farmhouses I had seen in Russia. In spite of the snow, which now fell heavily, I could not refrain from running down the road, to get a general view of the whole place. A nice place it was. It had a very lofty ground-floor, which one reached by a flight of about eight steps; over the ground-floor was a story consisting of sitting-rooms. The front of these was adorned by a small balcony, which, as well as the gallery that ran all round the ground-floor, had a penthouse roof to give shade in summer, and protect in some degree from the storms of winter. The whole appearance of the house reminded me of one of the cosy dwellings common in the Highlands of Bavaria, and brought to my mind pleasant reminiscences of my native land. After sufficiently contemplating the house, I walked across the court to the stables and barns. Here, too, what a difference! The utmost order, the most laborious care, were manifest in every detail; no carts or farming

implements lumbered the yard; not so much as a log of wood lay elsewhere than in its proper place. Thrashing was done in the barns—the straw was very dry: but, as far as I could judge, not stove-dried. The manure was gathered together in broad, level heaps, and formed a sort of natural wall—then covered with snow. The lowing of cows and oxen issued from the stables, where the sleek, well-fed beasts stood up to their knees in clean straw Eight strong draft horses occupied another stable; and in a large loose box three thriving foals were disporting themselves. In the racks was good store of hay, which the satiated cattle neglected to eat. The stable had windows, the crevices around which were well stuffed to exclude the cold. The place where the horses stood was boarded; the rest of the stable was paved, and a gutter ran down the centre. A degree of cleanliness every where prevailed, such as no Russian peasant ever enjoyed in his own dwelling-room. I was delighted at the neat and prosperous aspect of the place, and involuntarily I said to myself, "This is a German farm."

Just then, a huge titterring announced the arrival of the second sledge. I ran to the front of the house to help the ladies out. A fine, comely woman, about forty years of age, welcomed us in the dear language of our fatherland, and ushered us into the house.

A comfortable well-warmed room, furnished in the German fashion, received us. We hastily threw off our pelisses, helped the ladies to peel off their travelling accoutrements, and then began to look about us.

How delighted we were when in every corner, on every screen, in every picture that decorated the walls, we found something to remind us of our German homes. "Ah! here is Cologne Cathedral!" cried one. "And see here, old Fritz upon his charger!" responded another. "And here the King and Queen!" Under a wreath of *immortelles* hung a portrait of the King's father and of Queen Louisa. Upon the opposite wall was the well-known picture, "*Bon soir, Messieurs!*" old Ziethen, and the Death of Schwerin. We Prussians felt our hearts swell at the sight of all these things; two Viennese were rejoicing before a picture of the Stephen's Tower; on the sofa a young lady from Mannheim sat under a sketch of Heidelberg Castle and wept right bitterly.

I began to think we had come to rather a melancholy merry-making; but presently, old associations and home-memories having had their due, eyes were dried and we seated ourselves round the smoking *samovar*. We had brought rum with us; but our host would not allow us to use it: we must taste his, and excellent we found it, as were also the milk, butter, cheese, sausage, everything in short which "the colony" yielded. After we had eaten and drank, we sat round the blazing fire, and, in order to pass the evening in a thoroughly German manner, we proposed to tell ghost stories. The ingenious proposition found universal approval; in all haste we formed ourselves into a "spectre-club," put out the lights, drew our chairs close in to the fire, and, reverting to the happy days of childhood, told grim tales till we were frightened to look over our shoulders.

I had just told the story of the Moors' heads, of old-fashioned chiselling, which stood over the door in the hall of a ducal hunting-seat near Weimar, and which, on several occasions had acquired vitality, had been seen to turn from side to side and to roll their eyes—which prodigy Mrs. Von H—— had often assured us that she herself had witnessed. As a commentary on her testimony I am bound here to remark that this lady, estimable for her very excellent qualities, was an *enormous* ghost-seer. This thrilling history, however, I had just concluded, and Lilla Loewee was about to commence another concerning the White Lady of Carlsruhe Castle, rather a favourite haunt of ghosts, when the hostess came into the room bearing two chandeliers and preceding two maid-servants, one of whom carried an enormous goose and the other a heath-cock of gigantic proportions. The Petersburgers and others attacked the latter; but we children of Berlin rallied round the goose, and did all honour to this product of our German hostess's farmyard.

After the meal I got the master of the house into the recess of a window, paid him a compliment on the excellent management of his homestead, and inquired the origin of the colony. "My ancestors," he replied, "emigrated hither from the neighbourhood of Liegnitz in the reign of the Empress Catharine the Second, at the time of the Silesian war. If you were to visit us in summer you would see fields and orchards such as are not to be met with every

day, even in dear old Germany. When the emigrants first settled here, there was nothing for miles around but moor and swamp. Their means were small, for the disastrous war had ruined them, but the Empress gave them a grant of the land free of all imposts for a hundred years, and aided them by advances of money free of interest; thus they were enabled to get the land into cultivation and to bequeath to their children a good and unburdened estate. Soon after that time some Englishmen came to settle here; they brought considerable capital, purchased extensive tracts of land, and, possessing all the requisite means, they established a farm very superior to ours, and which has maintained its superiority even to the present day. That is the settlement known as 'The English Colony.' We, however, are quite contented with our lot, and cannot comprehend the dread of Russia, which—as we learn from those of our countrymen who visit us—generally prevails abroad. True it is that we do not discuss politics much; but do the rural population elsewhere understand much about that subject? I fear that if we took to busying our heads with political matters, it would go worse with our farms and very little better with the government of the world." So saying, he turned cheerfully to the table. "Gentlemen," he cried, "you have tasted of my rum, which does my house no discredit, as I hope presently further to prove to you by manufacturing from it a glass of punch; but my cellar contains nothing but common wine. I know that you have wine with you; so, gentlemen, stand on no ceremony, and scruple not to drink it if you prefer it to mine." A loud hurrah welcomed this frank speech of our cordial and hospitable entertainer; our bottles were produced; but towards the end of the evening they had to yield precedence to the delicious punch brewed for us by our German host. Midnight came and passed and left us in the height of our conviviality; the healths of all present and of many absent friends were repeatedly toasted; a parting glass was emptied to the renown and prosperity of Germany, and it was not until three in the morning that we got back to St. Petersburg.

The evening at the German Colony was the happiest that I passed during my residence in Russia's brilliant metropolis.

THE END.

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